

**OFFICE OF CONTRACT SUPPORT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) 024
FORMAL SOURCE SELECTION PROCEDURES
BEST PRACTICES GUIDE**

- 1. PURPOSE.** This SOP establishes Office of Contract Support (G-ACS) source selection procedures for high dollar, competitively negotiated procurements.
- 2. APPLICABILITY.** This SOP applies to procurements with an estimated cost at or over \$20,000,000 that use the procedures of Federal Acquisition Regulation subpart 15.3., Source Selection. This SOP does not apply to actions that procure goods or services using GSA Federal Supply Schedules or other Government Agency Contracts such as ITOPS.
- 3. PROCEDURE.** Contracting Officers and Contract Specialists shall follow the procedures in Enclosure (1) for those procurements described above in Paragraph 2.0. These procedures shall be used in conjunction with Subchapter 1215.3 of COMDTINST M4200.19F, Coast Guard Acquisition Procedures.
- 4. DEVIATIONS AND CHANGES.** See Chapter paragraphs G-ACS personnel wishing to deviate from the procedures and guidelines of this handbook must receive advanced, written approval from the SEB Chairperson. Requested deviations shall contain the proposed deviation and supporting rationale.
- 5. CANCELLATION.** HQINST M4150.3, Formal Source Selection Procedures, is cancelled and the procedures in that instruction are superseded by this document.

THOMAS K. BRUST
Deputy Chief,
Office of Contract Support

Encl: (1) Source Selection Procedures



G-ACS SOURCE SELECTION PROCEDURES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

NO. 24

ENCLOSURE (1)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 1. | INTRODUCTION | |
| | A. Purpose..... | 1-1 |
| | B. Applicability..... | 1-1 |
| | C. Objective..... | 1-1 |
| | D. How to Use This SOP | 1-1 |
| | E. Deviations | 1-1 |
| | F. Changes/Updates | 1-2 |
| | G. Reference Materials | 1-2 |
| CHAPTER 2. | OVERVIEW OF THE COMPETITIVE SOURCE SELECTION PROCESS | |
| | A. Introduction..... | 2-1 |
| | B. Competitive Negotiation Process..... | 2-1 |
| | C. Streamlining Techniques..... | 2-2 |
| CHAPTER 3. | SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES | |
| | A. Major Acquisitions..... | 3-1 |
| | 1. Overview..... | 3-1 |
| | 2. Major Acquisitions and Formal Source Selection Procedures. | 3-1 |
| | 3. Source Selection Organization..... | 3-1 |
| | 4. Responsibilities..... | 3-4 |
| | B. Qualifications and Size | 3-4 |
| | 1. Qualifications | 3-4 |
| | 2. Size | 3-4 |
| | C. Operations..... | 3-4 |
| CHAPTER 4. | ACQUISITION PLANNING & PRESOLICITATION ACTIVITIES | |
| | A. Introduction..... | 4-1 |
| | B. Identifying The Need..... | 4-1 |
| | 1. Mission Analysis Report | 4-1 |
| | 2. Mission Need Statement..... | 4-2 |
| | C. Developing Operational Requirements..... | 4-2 |
| | D. Specifications or Statement of Work..... | 4-2 |
| | E. Acquisition Planning..... | 4-4 |
| | 1. Acquisition Strategy Session..... | 4-4 |

| | |
|--|------|
| 2. Acquisition Plan..... | 4-4 |
| F. Establishing the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) | |
| 1. Appointment of SEB Members, Advisors, and the PEAG..... | 4-6 |
| 2. Orientation of SEB Members, Advisors, and the PEAG..... | 4-7 |
| G. Developing Evaluation Criteria..... | 4-7 |
| H. Developing RFP Sections L and M..... | 4-7 |
| I. Developing the Selection Plan (SP)..... | 4-8 |
| 1. Purpose..... | 4-8 |
| 2. Responsibility..... | 4-8 |
| 3. Content..... | 4-8 |
| 4. Review and Approval of the Selection Plan..... | 4-8 |
| 5. Changes to the Selection Plan..... | 4-8 |
| J. Proposal Evaluation Procedures (PEP)..... | 4-9 |
| 1. Responsibility..... | 4-9 |
| 2. Timing..... | 4-9 |
| 3. Format..... | 4-9 |
| 4. Developing Standards..... | 4-9 |
| 5. Rating Methodology..... | 4-9 |
| 6. Evaluation Worksheets..... | 4-11 |
| 7. Review and Approval..... | 4-11 |
| K. Requests For Proposals..... | 4-11 |
| 1. Incorporating Comments..... | 4-11 |
| 2. Review and Approval..... | 4-11 |
| L. Commerce Business Daily Synopsis..... | 4-12 |

CHAPTER 5. SOLICITING INDUSTRY

| | |
|---|-----|
| A. Introduction..... | 5-1 |
| B. Issuing the RFP..... | 5-1 |
| C. Questions from Industry..... | 5-2 |
| D. Responding to Industry..... | 5-2 |
| 1. Coordinating the Response..... | 5-2 |
| 2. Responding to Questions..... | 5-2 |
| E. Amending the RFP..... | 5-2 |
| 1. General..... | 5-2 |
| 2. Changes to Section M..... | 5-2 |
| 3. Extensions to Proposed Due Date..... | 5-3 |
| F. Pre-Proposal Conferences..... | 5-3 |
| 1. Responsibilities..... | 5-3 |
| 2. Questions From Industry..... | 5-3 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 3. Record of the Conference..... | 5-4 |
| G. Site Visits..... | 5-4 |

CHAPTER 6. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND THE AWARD/COMPETITIVE RANGE DECISION

| | |
|---|------------|
| A. Introduction..... | 6-1 |
| B. Receipt of Proposals..... | 6-1 |
| 1. Recording Proposals..... | 6-1 |
| 2. Securing Proposals..... | 6-1 |
| C. Convening the Evaluation Teams..... | 6-1 |
| D. Convening the SEB..... | 6-2 |
| E. Initial Proposal Review..... | 6-2 |
| F. Initial Evaluations..... | 6-2 |
| 1. Technical Evaluations..... | 6-3 |
| 2. Price/Cost Evaluation..... | 6-4 |
| 3. Progress Meetings..... | 6-4 |
| G. Exchanges with Offerors | 6-4 |
| H. SEB Report/Presentation..... | 6-5 |
| 1. SEB Report..... | 6-5 |
| 2. SEB Presentation..... | 6-5 |
| 3. SEB Review and Approval..... | 6-5 |
| 4. Award/Competitive Range Recommendation..... | 6-5 |
| I. Awarding On Initial Offers..... | 6-6 |
| J. Competitive Range Determination..... | 6-6 |
| K. Single Offeror In Competitive Range..... | 6-6 |
| L. Notifying Unsuccessful Offerors..... | 6-7 |
| M. Preaward Debriefing of Unsuccessful Offerors..... | 6-7 |

CHAPTER 7. EXCHANGES AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMPETITIVE RANGE

| | |
|--|------------|
| A. Introduction..... | 7-1 |
| B. Purpose..... | 7-1 |
| C. Conducting Discussions | 7-1 |
| 1. Responsibility..... | 7-1 |
| 2. Policy..... | 7-1 |
| 3. Procedures..... | 7-1 |
| D. Scope of Discussions | 7-2 |
| 1. Types of Discussions | 7-2 |
| 2. Limitations on Discussions | 7-3 |
| E. Requests for Final Proposal Revisions.(FPR)..... | 7-3 |

CHAPTER 8. FINAL PROPOSAL REVISIONS

| | |
|---|------------|
| A. Introduction..... | 8-1 |
| B. Requesting FPRs..... | 8-1 |
| C. Receiving FPRs..... | 8-2 |
| 1. Securing FPRs..... | 8-2 |
| 2. Late FPRs..... | 8-2 |
| D. Evaluating FPRs..... | 8-2 |
| 1. Reconvening the Evaluation Teams..... | 8-2 |
| 2. Evaluating FPRs..... | 8-2 |
| 3. Evaluation Reports..... | 8-2 |
| E. Reopening Discussions | 8-2 |

CHAPTER 9. SOURCE SELECTION

| | |
|---|------------|
| A. SEB Report..... | 9-1 |
| 1. Preparing the Final SEB Report..... | 9-1 |
| 2. Distributing the Final SEB Report..... | 9-1 |
| 3. SEB Briefing..... | 9-1 |
| 4. SEB Review and Meeting..... | 9-1 |
| 5. Finalizing the SEB Report..... | 9-1 |
| 6. Source Selection Decision Memoranda..... | 9-1 |
| 7. Submission to the Source Selection Authority (SSA)..... | 9-1 |
| B. SSA Presentation..... | 9-1 |
| 1. Scheduling the Presentation..... | 9-1 |
| 2. Preparing Briefing Materials..... | 9-2 |
| 3. Review of Briefing Materials..... | 9-2 |
| 4. Presentation to the SSA..... | 9-2 |
| C. Source Selection..... | 9-2 |
| 1. Significance of Evaluation Ratings..... | 9-2 |
| 2. Consistency with RFP Evaluation Factors..... | 9-2 |
| D. Documenting the Source Selection Decision | 9-3 |
| E. Presentation to the Command/Vice Commandant | 9-3 |

CHAPTER 10. CONTRACT AWARD AND DEBRIEFING

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| A. Introduction..... | 10-1 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| B. Preparing the Contract..... | 10-1 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---|-------------|
| C. Notification In Small Business | |
| Set-Asides..... | 10-1 |
| D. Public Announcement..... | 10-1 |
| E. Awarding the Contract..... | 10-1 |
| F. Notifying Unsuccessful Offerors | 10-2 |
| G. Notifying Office of Public Affairs..... | 10-2 |
| H. Synopsizing Contract Award..... | 10-2 |
| I. Post-Award Debriefings..... | 10-2 |
| 1. Procedures..... | 10-2 |
| 2. Participants..... | 10-2 |
| 3. Requirements..... | 10-2 |
| 4. File Documentation..... | 10-3 |
| J. Lessons Learned Memorandum..... | 10-3 |
| K. Retention of Records..... | 10-4 |

- Enclosures:**
- (1) Source Selection Organization Responsibilities**
 - (2) Conducting SEB Orientation**
 - (3) Development of Evaluation Factors**
 - (4) Developing RFP Sections L and M**
 - (5) Sample Selection Plan (SP)**
 - (6) Sample Memorandum Amending the SP**
 - (7) Sample Proposal Evaluation Procedures (PEP)**
 - (8) Developing Evaluation Standards**
 - (9) Sample Source Selection Memorandum**
 - (10) Opening Statement for Debriefings**

- Appendices: A List of Acronyms**

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Purpose.** This Standard Operations Procedure (SOP) establishes Office of Contract Support (G-ACS) policies and procedures for selecting sources for high dollar, competitive, negotiated acquisitions. The policies and procedures established represent G-ACS formal source selection procedures as permitted by Subpart 15.3 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Subchapter 1215.3 of the Transportation Acquisition Manual (TAM) and Subchapter 1215.3 of the Coast Guard Acquisition Procedures (CGAP).
- B. **Applicability.** This SOP generally applies to competitive, negotiated actions over \$20,000,000. However, exceptions apply. While this SOP addresses formal source selection procedures for major acquisitions, these procedures also apply, on a customized basis, to other than major acquisitions that equal or exceed \$20 million. These procedures are optional when formal source selection procedures are not required. In such cases, G-ACS personnel must carefully tailor these procedures to meet the needs of their particular procurement.
- C. **Objective.** The objectives of source selection procedures are to:
1. Maximize competition;
 2. Minimize the complexity of the solicitation, evaluation, and the selection decision;
 3. Ensure impartial and comprehensive evaluation of offerors' proposals; and
 4. Ensure selection of the source whose proposal has the highest degree of realism and whose performance is expected to best meet stated Government requirements.
- D. **How To Use This SOP.** This SOP is divided into ten chapters. A detailed table of contents is provided to assist in locating information. Chapter One consists of this introduction. Chapter Two provides an overview of the competitive, negotiated source selection process and is intended to orient the “novice” with the source selection process as a whole. It may also facilitate an understanding of the remaining chapters. In addition, Chapter Two introduces various streamlining techniques that may be used to expedite the selection process. Chapter Three describes the source selection organization and structure, and assigns responsibilities to members of that organization. Chapter Three also provides an overview of the unique characteristics of a major acquisition and how formal source selection procedures fit into the major acquisition process. The remaining chapters are organized to follow the discrete steps in the formal source selection process—addressing the issues that arise in each step. Appendix A is a listing of all acronyms used in this SOP.
- E. **Deviations.** G-ACS personnel wishing to deviate from the procedures in this SOP for a specific procurement must receive advanced, written approval from the SEB Chairperson.

Requested deviations shall contain the proposed deviation and supporting rationale. One copy of the approved deviation shall be provided to G-ACS-3.

- F. Changes/Updates.** Recommended changes to this SOP shall be provided to G-ACS-3. Updates to this SOP shall be incorporated as required. When necessary, this SOP will be supplemented by Procurement Flash Notices to expedite the dissemination changes to procedures and “lessons learned.”
- G. Reference Materials.** This document is not all-inclusive. Readers will need to refer to other materials (e.g., manuals, directives, instructions, etc.) to complete some of the tasking addressed in this SOP. Listed below is a summary of other documents referenced in this SOP.
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)
 - Transportation Acquisition Regulation (TAR)
 - Transportation Acquisition Manual (TAM)
 - COMDTINST M4200.19 (series), Coast Guard Acquisition Procedures (CGAP)
 - COMDTINST M4150.2 (series), Systems Acquisition Manual (SAM)

CHAPTER 2. OVERVIEW OF THE COMPETITIVE SOURCE SELECTION PROCESS

- A. **Introduction.** This SOP focuses on the formal source selection process as it applies to competitive, negotiated procurements estimated to be valued at \$20M or greater. By definition, negotiation is contracting without using sealed bidding. It is accomplished through solicitation and receipt of proposals from offerors; it permits discussions, persuasion, alteration of initial positions, and it may afford offerors an opportunity to revise their offers before the award of a contract.
- B. **Competitive Negotiation Process.** The competitive, negotiation process includes eight distinct phases. Although this SOP addresses formal source selection procedures involving boards, advisors, and evaluation teams, the phases discussed below apply, in some fashion, to all competitively negotiated procurements.
1. **Phase One:** Acquisition Planning and Presolicitation Activities. The acquisition planning phase begins when the Coast Guard identifies a need. Once a need is identified, the specific requirements to satisfy that need are defined (i.e., a specification or work statement) and an acquisition strategy developed (i.e., the acquisition plan), including the plan for selecting the successful source (i.e., the selection plan). As decisions are finalized regarding the specification and the contracting strategy, the Government prepares a Request for Proposal (RFP) which describes the product or service needed, the contract's proposed terms and conditions, and evaluation factors for award. The RFP also provides prospective offerors with instructions on preparing and submitting proposals.
 2. **Phase Two:** Soliciting Industry. Once completed, an RFP is released to industry. During this phase, prospective offerors are provided 30 days or more to prepare their proposals in response to the Government's RFP.
 3. **Phase Three:** Proposal Evaluation. The initial evaluation phase begins with the receipt of offers from prospective contractors. Proposals are typically evaluated by a team of personnel. A report of evaluation results is then presented to the Source Evaluation Board (SEB).
 4. **Phase Four:** Award/Competitive Range Decision. Once proposals have been evaluated, the Government may award a contract without discussions (if the solicitation so provides) or establish a competitive range (defined to include those proposals deemed to be the most highly rated, unless the range is further reduced for purposes of efficiency pursuant to FAR 15.306(c)(2)), conduct discussions, solicit final proposal revisions, and then may select a source, or sources, for award. If a competitive range is established, the Contracting Officer notifies unsuccessful offerors and may, if requested by unsuccessful offerors, conduct pre-award debriefings. If the agency decides to award without discussions, the next phase is Source Selection (Phase Seven); otherwise Phase Five, Exchanges after the establishment of the competitive range, is next.

5. **Phase Five:** Exchanges After the Establishment of the Competitive Range. During this phase, offerors within the competitive range are provided the opportunity, to discuss specific aspects of their proposal with the Government. At a minimum, the Government must discuss significant weaknesses, deficiencies, and other aspects of an offeror's proposal that the Government believes could be changed to greatly increase the offeror's chance for award.
6. **Phase Six:** Final Proposal Revisions. Once exchanges are completed, the Government requests final proposal revisions (FPRs), from all offerors remaining in the competitive range. Upon receipt of FPRs, evaluation teams reconvene to conduct a final evaluation of offerors and their proposals and a final evaluation report is prepared for the Source Selection Authority (SSA).
7. **Phase Seven:** Source Selection. Using the findings of the evaluation teams, the SSA selects the source or sources for contract award. The report presented to the SSA is critical to the selection process. It facilitates the exercise of the SSA's independent judgment since the SSA is not bound by the findings of the evaluation teams. However, the selection decision must be rational and must follow the evaluation factors stipulated in the RFP. The documentation of the SSA's selection decision concludes Phase Seven.
8. **Phase Eight:** Contract Award and Debriefing. The final phase of the competitive, negotiation process is contract award and debriefing. During this phase, the Government finalizes all contract related documents and obtains all required approvals and clearances. Both successful and unsuccessful offerors are notified of the award. Unsuccessful offerors may request a debrief. The purpose of a debrief is to provide unsuccessful offerors with information to help them prepare better proposals in the future (but see FAR 15.506 and 15.507 for limitations on debriefings). Once debriefings are completed, and provided unsuccessful offerors do not protest, the source selection process is completed.

C. **Streamlining Techniques.** The use of competitive, negotiation procedures is an elaborate process. The Government's selection decision must be fair, carefully deliberated and well documented. All of this leads to a structured source selection process. However, recognizing the need to expedite the source selection process, there are several streamlining initiatives that should be considered, in some variation, in every competitive, negotiated procurement. These procedures are:

1. **Greater Presolicitation Efforts.** During the acquisition planning phase, the Coast Guard may solicit industry's comments by issuing draft specifications, draft work statements, and draft RFPs. Although these activities appear time consuming, if properly planned, they contribute to a procurement's success by allowing industry to identify potential problem areas and cost drivers. This process also allows the Government to tap industry's expertise in formulating alternative solutions.

2. **Increase Industry Communications/One-on-One Communications.** The purpose of these individual, pre-solicitation discussions, also referred to as one-on-one meetings, is twofold: They insure that the Government adequately understands the market in which it intends to acquire specific goods and services; and they insure that industry fully understands the Government's requirements.
3. **Limiting Source Selection Organization Members.** The source selection organization should be staffed with only the minimum number of personnel necessary to conduct the evaluation.
4. **Developing Macro (vice detailed) Evaluation Factors.** Evaluation teams should establish factors for and evaluate only those areas that contribute to the purpose of the agency's procurement and make a difference in the selection process.
5. **Transmitting RFPs Electronically.** Issue RFPs electronically to reduce the cost and time associated with mailing hard copies of RFPs.
6. **Limiting Proposal Pages.** By imposing page limitations, offerors are forced to provide succinct proposals that in turn expedite the evaluation process.
7. **Limiting Audit and Field Pricing Support.** Eliminate the requirement for submission of cost and pricing data (see FAR 15.408, Table 15-2) and request audit and field pricing support on an "as needed" basis. Most RFPs will not require certified cost and pricing data because of the existence of adequate competition.
8. **Awarding on Initial Offers.** Every procurement should be planned with a view toward awarding on initial offers. Therefore statements of work, specifications, proposal preparation instructions, and evaluation factors must be clearly written to ensure potential offerors understand the Government's requirements.
9. **Limiting the Competitive Range.** The SEB should recommend the Contracting Officer limit the competitive range to only the most highly rated proposals or further limit the competitive range to the extent that an efficient competition is effected.
10. **Oral Presentations.** Eliminate, or greatly reduce, the need for written material where information can be conveyed in a more meaningful and efficient manner through verbal means. Oral presentations permit the exchange of information between government evaluators and key members of the offeror's team. (Note: If during oral presentations, the Government conducts discussions, the Government must comply with FAR 15.306 and FAR 15.307.)
11. **Advisory Multi-Step Process.** In certain source selections, it may be appropriate to use various down-select processes to request full proposals from a limited number of offerors.

SOP 24, Source Selection Procedures

In these cases, offerors are requested to submit limited presolicitation information, which allows the Government to advise the offerors about their potential to be viable competitors and whether they will be invited to participate in the resultant acquisition. However, be aware that all proposals received, whether invited or not, must be evaluated.

Chapter 3. SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Major Acquisitions.

1. **Overview.** COMDTINST M4150.2E, Systems Acquisition Manual, defines the activities of the major acquisition process. This chapter discusses how formal source selection fits into the major acquisition process. Per COMDTINST M4150.2E, a major acquisition is one that exceeds \$50 million or one that requires special management attention, normally between \$5 million and \$50 million. The distinguishing feature between a major acquisition and those referred to as “other than major acquisitions” is the mandate that agencies acquiring major systems designate an acquisition executive to integrate and unify the management process and the designation of project managers to accomplish project objectives.
2. **Major Acquisitions and Formal Source Selection Procedures.** The major acquisition process is a sequence of activities, starting with the reconciliation of the agency mission needs with the agency’s capabilities, priorities and resources, and extending through the introduction of a system into operational use. The major acquisition process is essentially a progressive process. As an acquisition progresses from one phase to the next in the acquisition cycle, the Coast Guard may require supplies or services from private industry to support the activities involved in a particular phase of the acquisition cycle. When this occurs, Commandant (G-ACS), as a member of the matrix team, is responsible for procuring the requirement. The strategy for procuring needed supplies or services (e.g., through another agency, sealed bid, sole source, or competitively negotiated) is determined early in the acquisition process. When, because of complexity of a proposed procurement, the contracting officer determines that a negotiated, competitive procurement is appropriate, and the dollar value exceeds \$50M, then formal source selection procedures become part of the acquisition strategy. These procedures are also applicable on a customized basis for other than major acquisitions that equal or exceed \$20 million.
3. **Source Selection Organization.** The source selection organization (SSO) consists of the following:
 - a. Source Selection Authority. The Source Selection Authority (SSA) is the person solely responsible for selecting the source or sources for contract award. The Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) (Commandant (G-CFP)) is the SSA for major acquisitions following formal source selection procedures. For other than major acquisitions, the Chief, Office of Contract Support (G-ACS) or the Deputy Chief, Office of Contract Support (G-ACS(d)) is the SSA.
 - b. Oversight Boards. (Applicable to Major Acquisitions only)
 - 1) Competitive Acquisition Management Panel (CAMP). The CAMP keeps

senior management involved and advised on particularly large or sensitive acquisitions. A CAMP may be used when senior management oversight is desirable during the selection process. Use of a CAMP occurs when approved by the SSA in the Selection Plan (SP). The CAMP reviews the actions of the SEB and offers advice to the SSA. The CAMP consists of the Assistant Commandant for Acquisition, the Deputy Assistant Commandant for Acquisition, the Assistant Commandant for the sponsor, and the Assistant Commandant for the support manager or their designees.

- c. Source Evaluation Board. The SEB is composed of subject matter specialists responsible for ensuring the thorough and fair evaluation of proposals, following the established criteria in the SP and the RFP, and reporting its findings to (i) the contracting officer for use in determining the competitive range, and (ii) the SSA for use in making the selection decision. Composition of the SEB will vary depending on the complexity of the requirement. However, the standard organization for a major acquisition consists of the following individuals:
 - 1) Chairperson. The Chief, Office of Contract Support or a designated representative shall chair the SEB.
 - 2) Members. In addition to the chairperson, the SEB is normally chosen from among the Project Manager (PM); the Chief, Major Systems Contracts Division (Commandant (G-ACS)) when not chairing the board; a technical representative; and a representative from the Sponsor's office. Representatives of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Acquisition and Grant Management (M-60) and the DOT Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs (B-1) may be members on Level I and II major acquisitions.
 - 3) Advisors. Advisors are normally chosen from among the Contracting Officer (KO) and contract specialist; a legal representative from the Procurement Law Division (Commandant (G-LPL)); a representative from the Procurement Management Division (Commandant (G-CPM)); the Chief, Major Systems Contracts Division (Commandant (G-ACS)) when not participating as the Chairperson or an SEB member; a board recorder and security officer. There is no restriction on the remaining number of advisors to the SEB. Additional advisors might include the Deputy Project Manager; Deputy Chief, Office of Contract Support (Commandant (G-ACSd)); and additional sponsor representatives. For other than major acquisitions, the Deputy Assistant Commandant for Acquisition shall be appointed as an advisor.
- d. Proposal Evaluation Analysis Group (PEAG). The PEAG is a matrix of various evaluation teams formed to support the SEB. The PEAG develops the Proposal

Evaluation Procedures (PEP) and conducts a detailed evaluation of proposals. The use of contractors as members of the PEAG shall be in accordance with FAR 15.305(c) and approved by the SSA in the SP. The working bodies of the PEAG are:

- 1) Chair/Co-Chair. The contracting officer shall chair the PEAG. If Co-Chairs are assigned, the contracting officer and a representative from the Project staff shall chair the PEAG.
- 2) Technical Evaluation Team (TET). The TET conducts a detailed evaluation of technical and management proposals. Evaluators should come from areas of expertise that support the objective of the procurement.
- 3) Cost/Price Evaluation Team (C/PET). The C/PET evaluates cost or price proposals. Normally, membership includes a cost/price analyst and a technical representative.
- 4) Other evaluation teams. Depending upon the nature of the procurement, other evaluation teams may be required. For example, a software capability evaluation team (SCET) may be needed to evaluate an offeror's procedures for developing software. A past performance evaluation team will be needed to evaluate offerors' past performance if the TET does not perform this evaluation.

e. Consultants.

- 1) General. The SEB may seek the advice of consultants if essential to the evaluation or selection process. Consultants are approved by the SSA in the SP and may be either Government or non-Government employees. The SEB Chairperson (Commandant (G-ACS)) or a designee authorizes the use of consultants on an "as needed" basis. The PEP shall delineate the procedures for obtaining the advice of a consultant. Consultants are NOT members of the source selection organization. Therefore, consultants shall not have access to proposals, evaluation documentation, or information regarding source selection proceedings except on a need to know basis as determined by the SEB Chairperson. All consultants will be governed by the Security Plan established for the acquisition. Contracting officers shall consult the procedures at FAR 9.504 when providing proprietary information to non-Government employees.
- 2) Technical Advisory Group. A technical advisory group (TAG) may be formed when a broad range of technical expertise is required to support the evaluation teams. Members of the TAG are consultants and are subject to the general provisions discussed above in subparagraph e.1). Communication between the TAG and the evaluation teams is routed through and reviewed by the PEAG

Chair/Co-Chairs. The PEP shall provide specific procedures for obtaining the expertise of the TAG.

4. **Responsibilities.** Enclosure (1) lists the responsibilities of the Source Selection Organization members.

B. Qualifications and Size.

1. **Qualifications.** SEBs and evaluation teams shall be comprised of qualified management, technical, contracting and business experts. Membership of the SEB should be balanced to include individuals with a vested interest in the success of the procurement yet tempered with individuals from outside the requiring office or project office to ensure objectivity. Personnel appointed to chair the evaluation teams should, to the maximum extent practicable, have previous experience with formal source selection procedures.
2. **Size.** The SEB should not exceed seven members, including the chairperson. The number of advisors and size of evaluation teams should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the procurement. Membership of the evaluation teams should be limited to the number needed to conduct a thorough evaluation. The number of evaluators will depend upon the nature of the procurement. However, experience has shown that evaluation teams should not exceed more than four members, including the chairperson. Beyond that number, the discussion of issues increases with decreasing benefits. To conserve resources, the board recorder may also serve as the security officer.

- C. Operations.** The SEB is responsible for all matters relating to the conduct of proposal evaluation. Full discussion is encouraged on all matters considered by the SEB. The goal in all discussions is to achieve a consensus rather than a majority rule (no voting). When, after thoughtful and thorough discussion, a disagreement cannot be resolved, the SEB Chairperson shall make the final decision on all matters relating to the conduct of the evaluation.

CHAPTER 4. ACQUISITION PLANNING & PRESOLICITATION ACTIVITIES

- A. **Introduction.** The Source Evaluation Board (SEB) is formally established when the Source Selection Authority (SSA) approves the Selection Plan (SP). However, several other activities occur before an SP is approved. These activities are listed in Table 4-1 and occur in what is commonly known as the acquisition planning and presolicitation phase. Although each activity is discussed separately, some events run concurrently and, at times, are re-visited as requirements are refined.

| ACTIVITY | DOCUMENTATION | RESPONSIBILITY | ASSISTED BY |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Identify Need | MAR; MNS | Sponsor | G-A-2 |
| Develop Oper. Requirements | PORD; ORD | Sponsor | G-A-2 |
| Develop Acquisition Strategy | AP | KO | PM G-A-2 |
| Nominate SEB Members to SEB Chair | Memo | PM | KO |
| Develop Selection Criteria | Eval. Criteria | PM | KO |
| Develop Selection Plan | SP | KO | PM |
| Note: Acronyms are defined in Appendix A | | | |

TABLE 4-1

- B. **Identifying The Need.** The first step in any acquisition is identifying the need or needs of the organization. Below is a description of how needs are identified and documented.

1. **Mission Analysis Report.** One key characteristic of the major acquisition process is

top-level management attention to the analysis and identification of agency mission needs. Mission analysis is a continuous process, conducted by Operating Program Directors to: monitor mission accomplishment, identify changing mission needs, and anticipate new missions and the obsolescence of current assets. When mission analysis identifies circumstances which cause the degradation of mission accomplishment, the results are documented in a Mission Analysis Report (MAR) to show the difference between the prospective mission needs and the current capability. Assuming there are no “non-material” solutions (i.e., remedies other than asset acquisition), the MAR provides justification for the acquisition of a new system. Once a MAR is approved and a project nominated, a Mission Need Statement (MNS) is prepared.

2. **Mission Need Statement.** The Mission Need Statement (MNS) describes the functional capabilities required to accomplish a Coast Guard mission that cannot be met with current resources. The MNS is the approval document for establishing a new acquisition project, without it, a project cannot be funded. It is prepared by the Operating Program Director (the sponsor) when mission analysis identifies a mission need. Approval of the MNS initiates the formal acquisition project. Once the MNS is approved, the Chief of Staff charts the project manager (PM). Once the PM is chartered, the project is assigned a contracting officer from the Office of Contract Support (Commandant (G-ACS)). From this point forward, the contracting officer supports the PM in various capacities to achieve the objectives of the project.
- C. **Developing Operational Requirements.** One of the primary considerations when acquiring a major system is to deliver a system that meets operational mission needs within cost and schedule constraints. To ensure this occurs, the sponsor establishes minimum performance requirements below which the mission (e.g., search and rescue) cannot be successfully performed. The Preliminary Operational Requirements Document (PORD) and the Operational Requirements Document (ORD) are the formal documents that establish minimum requirements. The PORD identifies requirements in terms of the range of minimum thresholds and operationally effective goals needed to develop and evaluate alternative design concepts. It evolves into the ORD. The ORD is a top level document which establishes the minimum acceptable standards of performance (thresholds) and optimum performance objectives for the system. The ORD serves as the ‘contract’ between the Sponsor and Assistant Commandant for Acquisition (G-A). Chapter 3 to COMDTINST M4150.2E, Systems Acquisitions Manual, provides the preparation, routing, and approval requirements for these documents.
- D. **Specifications or Statements of Work.** Once a specific need is identified, the PM must describe the requirement(s) to satisfy the Coast Guard need(s). This description is known as a specification or statement of work (SOW). Generally, a specification describes an item, component, or system and a statement of work describes services. For brevity, this instruction refers to specifications and statements of work collectively as “the specification.” The specification is one of the most important elements of a procurement. How it is written impacts the acquisition strategy. Because the specification is the foundation upon which a procurement is

built, specification writers should consider the following points when drafting a specification.

1. The specification has legal significance. It tells potential offerors what they must do to fulfill the Government's requirement, constitutes the basis for evaluating offers to determine if they satisfy the Government's needs, and binds the winning contractor to perform in accordance with the specification. Therefore, when writing a specification, consider how effectively an offeror can be judged against specification requirements.
2. By law, specifications must permit full and open competition to the **maximum** extent practicable and they must not be unduly restrictive. To this end, specifications should reflect only the Government's minimum needs, and most definitely must not be written around a particular company's product or service. As a rule of thumb, the Coast Guard must be able to trace every stated requirement in the specification back to an operational requirement (i.e., need).
3. Remember when drafting a specification the Coast Guard and the contractor must understand the requirement. Therefore:
 - a. Avoid ambiguous specifications. "Ambiguous" means written in such a way that it could reasonably be interpreted in at least two different ways—regardless of whether both are correct.
 - b. Do not "borrow" requirements in whole or in part from another specification unless you fully understand the requirement. Too often specifications are drawn from previous or similar specifications and stated requirements are inapplicable or their meaning unknown.
 - c. Read all reference materials (e.g., publications, standards, specifications, etc.) before incorporating them into a specification to ensure all requirements in these documents apply. If necessary, incorporate only the applicable portions of referenced material in the specification.
 - d. State a requirement only once and, to the extent practicable, incorporate all reference material in full text.
 - e. To the extent practicable, the specification should state requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required rather than a specific design. Functional or performance specifications generally promote more competition and encourage innovative solutions. However, there are circumstances when a design specification is appropriate and, in practice, requirements are often stated as a combination of the three.
 - f. Strive to make the document readable by all parties. Define terms that have more than

one meaning or use. Define acronyms. An index, table of terms, and definition section are often helpful, but try to avoid multiple cross referencing which breaks up the flow of the text and increases the risk of inconsistent duplication.

- g. Use commercial or industry standards instead of Military or Federal standards to the maximum extent possible.

E. Acquisition Planning. Acquisition planning is the process by which the efforts of all personnel responsible for an acquisition are coordinated and integrated through a comprehensive plan for fulfilling the Coast Guard's need in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost. Acquisition planning begins as soon as the need is identified. Typically, for a major acquisition, it begins years before the supply or service is actually procured. The importance of acquisition planning cannot be overstated. The success of an acquisition hinges on proper planning and teamwork among all involved in the acquisition process. The activities that encompass acquisition planning vary for each procurement. However, regardless of the procurement, acquisition planning *should* begin with a meeting of all members involved in the acquisition.

1. **Acquisition Strategy Session.** An acquisition strategy session should be scheduled soon after a need is identified but before the Acquisition Plan (AP) is developed. The purpose of this meeting is to bring members from the PM's staff, the sponsor's office and the contracting office together to foster a team approach and develop the procurement acquisition strategy. At a minimum this meeting should include a representative from the PM's staff, the sponsor's office and the contracting officer. Other participants may also include representatives from Commandant (G-LPL), Commandant (G-CPM), the Small Business Specialist from Commandant (G-ACS), and other specialists depending upon the procurement objectives and history. Issues to discuss during this session include:
 - a. Acquisition objectives and history.
 - b. Potential problem areas (e.g., previous protests, highly technical product/service, unknown or limited sources, political interests, etc.).
 - c. Commitment by the key players to the acquisition process.
 - d. Alternative acquisition strategies including the use of the various streamlining techniques (see Chapter 2, paragraph C., entitled, Streamlining Techniques).
 - e. Establishment of major milestones and assignment of responsibilities.
2. **Acquisition Plan.** The AP describes the approach for achieving program objectives within imposed resource constraints. It also identifies the acquisition's strategy and the proposed streamlining techniques. Due to the complex nature of a major acquisition, APs for these acquisitions are written to address the acquisition of the entire system and not just

a single contract.

- a. Preparing the Plan. APs shall follow the format and content requirements specified in FAR 7.105. Chapter Five to COMDTINST M4150.2E, Systems Acquisition Manual, provides instructions on submitting and updating APs for major acquisitions.
- b. Developing Competition. An integral part of acquisition planning is the development of competition early in the acquisition process. There are a number of techniques that may be utilized to develop competition. Listed below are some proven strategies contracting officers should consider when planning a competitive, negotiated procurement:
 - 1) Issuing Draft Specifications. As a means of improving competition and the quality of the end product or service the Government ultimately receives, the contracting officer may furnish draft specifications to prospective offerors for review and comment. To be effective, draft specifications must be issued early in the acquisition planning phase. The availability of draft specifications should be published in Commerce Business Daily (CBD) and a copy of the draft specifications sent to all prospective offerors. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 5.205(c) provides guidance on preparing announcements on the availability of draft specifications. Sufficient time should be given to industry to allow for the submission of meaningful comments. Once received, the contracting officer shall distribute comments to the PM as appropriate, for consideration in the final specification.
 - 2) Issuing Draft Requests For Proposals (RFPs). A draft RFP is a solicitation which includes all the requirements, but which is sent to prospective offerors to request information. It is used as a streamlining technique to communicate with industry early in the procurement process to identify and resolve potential problem areas. An offeror's response to a draft RFP is not an offer and cannot be accepted by the Government to create a binding contract. Draft RFPs should be as complete as possible and shall contain at a minimum the specification, data requirements, evaluation factors, Section B, Section F, and unique or procurement specific clauses or provisions (e.g., organizational conflict of interest clauses, data rights, etc.). Contracting officers shall publish the availability of draft solicitations in the CBD following the guidance in FAR 5.205(c). Sufficient time (a minimum of 30 days) should be allowed to permit prospective offerors to respond meaningfully. Contracting officers should request industry's feedback on the identification of cost drivers and non-cost effective contract requirements, contract type, and any other changes that would enhance the acquisition program by improving system performance or reducing life cycle costs.

- 3) Presolicitation Notices/Conferences. Presolicitation notices and conferences are used whenever the cost of a formal solicitation is considerable and the Government is not assured of adequate sources for procurement. Notices and conferences may be used to develop sources, solicit preliminary information, explain complicated requirements and specifications, and aid interested parties in later submitting proposals without undue cost or effort.
- 4) One-on-One Communications. FAR 15.201 encourages Contracting Officers to conduct detailed exchanges of information with potential offerors early and often during the pre-solicitation phase. The most meaningful exchanges occur after the Government has developed a preliminary comprehensive description of its requirements, but early enough in the acquisition planning process to influence industry's decision to compete for the award. There is mutual benefit when these exchanges are frank, substantive, confidential and conversational.

The purpose of these individual, pre-solicitation exchanges, also referred to as one-on-one meetings, is twofold: (a) to ensure that the Government adequately understands the market in which it intends to acquire specific goods and services; and (b) to ensure that industry fully understands the Government's requirements. Use of One-on-Ones is a market research technique that can disclose considerable data that can significantly impact the solicitation process. Consequently, Government participants must be cautioned to focus on gathering and evaluating information rather than prematurely and inappropriately assessing the capability of specific firms.

Since One-on-Ones are conducted in the context of an acquisition, the Government team must take reasonable measures to safeguard procurement integrity. Therefore, the Contracting Officer should lead the meetings. Although One-on-Ones entail a significant commitment of project resources, Government participants should include the technical office, sponsor, and legal counsel. While each One-on-One will have its own structure and content, it is advisable to establish an agenda, general format and protocols. Ground rules should be established and communicated to each firm at the start of each meeting. The Project Office should maintain a record of the information shared.

F. Establishing the SEB.

1. **Appointment of SEB Members, Advisors, and the PEAG.** Source selection duties for all persons designated as a member of the source selection organization takes precedence over all other assigned duties.

- a. SEB Members. The SEB is formally established when the SSA approves the SP. However, many source selection functions must be completed before the approval of the SP. Therefore, the SEB is informally initiated when the Chief, Office of Contract Support, as the SEB Chairperson, nominates qualified individuals to the SEB. This generally occurs shortly after approval of the AP. Nominated SEB members will typically meet several times before the SP is approved to conduct various planning activities including finalizing the contracting strategy, reviewing specifications and statements of work, and developing the evaluation factors for inclusion in the SP. Nominations shall be initiated in writing by the SEB Chairperson and subject to formal approval by the SSA in the SP.
 - b. Advisors. As circumstances dictate, advisors may be nominated prior to formal SEB initiation, or they may be formally appointed to the source selection organization upon SP approval.
 - c. PEAG. The PEAG members are nominated following the SEB nomination procedures (see subparagraph F.1.a, above). Staffing of evaluation teams is generally an effort shared by the PM and the PEAG Chair/Co-Chair.
 - d. Nomination Memoranda. The Contracting Officer, as the PEAG Chair/Co-Chair, prepares the nomination memoranda for the signature of the prospective SEB Chairperson.
2. **Orientation of SEB Members, Advisors, and the PEAG.** A planning meeting of SEB members, advisors, PEAG Chairperson(s), and evaluators should be conducted as soon as practical after the nominations have been made. The purpose of this meeting is to organize the SEB; orient nominated SEB members, advisors, PEAG Chairperson(s), and evaluators with the evaluation process; and review each member's role and responsibilities within the organization. Enclosure (2) provides guidelines for conducting this meeting.
- G. Developing Evaluation Criteria.** As the specification takes form, the next step is to develop the evaluation criteria and determine their relative importance. The PM's staff/matrix, in conjunction with the prospective evaluation teams, develops the initial evaluation factors which are to be included in the SP and the RFP. Enclosure (3) provides instructions on developing evaluation criteria.
- H. Developing RFP Sections L and M.** Once the evaluation criteria are established, the Contracting Officer, with the assistance of the PM shall draft RFP Section L, Instructions, Conditions and Notices to Offerors, and Section M, Evaluation Factors For Award. Enclosure (4) provides guidance on preparing these sections.

I. Developing the Selection Plan (SP).

1. **Purpose.** The SP serves the following purposes:
 - a. It translates the objectives stated in the AP into a specific approach for soliciting and evaluating proposals.
 - b. It communicates the acquisition strategy and supporting activities.
 - c. It formally establishes the SEB.
 - d. It provides essential guidance to writers of the RFP regarding what should be emphasized in the solicitation.
 - e. It describes the evaluation factors to be used, and the relative importance of those factors, and the methodology to be used by the SEB in evaluating proposals.
2. **Responsibility.** The Contracting Officer, with the assistance of the PM staff/matrix prepares the SP.
3. **Content.** Enclosure (5) provides a sample SP and includes the minimum content requirements for SPs.
4. **Review and Approval of the Selection Plan.** The SSA approves the SP. The SP shall be forwarded to the SSA by memorandum from G-A and must be approved before the solicitation is issued. However, per CGAP Subchapter 1215.303-91(a), before submitting the SP for SSA approval, the SEB Chairperson, the sponsor, the Project Manager, G-LPL, G-CPM and G-ACS (if not the SEB Chairperson), shall review the plan. Reviewers shall ensure:
 - a. Evaluation factors and subfactors are clear, valid and susceptible to being evaluated and rated.
 - b. Evaluation factors and subfactors are mutually exclusive.
 - c. Evaluation factors and subfactors and their relative importance support the procurement's objective.
 - d. The SP supports the AP.
5. **Changes to the Selection Plan.** Once the SP is approved, any substantive change to the SP requires SSA approval. Substantive changes include changes to the evaluation factors

and changes to the SEB Chairperson. All proposed changes shall be in writing and transmitted using a memorandum similar to the one in Enclosure (6). Per CGAP Subchapter 1215.303-91(b) changes to the SP shall be transmitted directly from the Chairperson of the SEB to the SSA, with copies to the CAMP.

- J. Proposal Evaluation Procedures (PEP).** The PEP is a comprehensive plan for evaluating proposals. It provides detailed instructions and procedures to SEB and evaluation team members on conducting proposal evaluation. The PEP also contains instructions on safekeeping procurement sensitive data; establishes the procurement's evaluation rating system; establishes the standards against which each proposal is measured, and provides evaluation worksheets to each evaluator.
1. **Responsibility.** Development of the PEP is a collaborative effort of the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG). Each evaluation team (e.g., cost, technical, etc.) is responsible for developing its respective portion of the PEP. The Chairperson(s) of the PEAG has overall responsibility and submits the PEP to the SEB Chairperson for approval.
 2. **Timing/Approvals.** The SEB Chairperson approves the PEP. It shall be approved before issuance of the solicitation. The only exception to this rule is when the SEB Chairperson authorizes the release of the solicitation before approval of the PEP. However, under no circumstances shall proposals be released to evaluation teams before the SEB Chairperson approves the PEP.
 3. **Format.** Enclosure (7) contains the content requirements and instructions on preparing a PEP. While some of the PEP is "standard boiler plate", evaluation members are cautioned that each PEP must be tailored to suit the needs of the individual procurement.
 4. **Developing Standards.** Each PEP shall contain standards against which each competing proposal will be measured. Evaluation standards provide a means for disseminating uniform guidance to the evaluators on how to rate an offeror's proposal with respect to a given factor or subfactor. They focus the evaluation on each individual factor or subfactor and assist in achieving consistent and impartial evaluations. Evaluation standards serve as indicators of the minimum acceptable performance, compliance or capability required to enable a contractor to meet the requirements of the solicitation. They are a measurement guide to determine how well an offeror's response meets the Government's requirement. Standards also identify areas where a proposal's neglect could be evaluated as a failure to satisfy requirements. Enclosure (8) provides guidance on developing standards.
 5. **Rating Methodology.** The PEP also prescribes the system for rating evaluation factors. A rating scheme translates the narrative evaluation of proposals into a simple, easy to understand rating. It is the policy of the Office of Contract Support (G-ACS) to use an adjectival rating system in all competitively negotiated acquisitions. Each rating is then

assigned a corresponding color code. The following ratings and associated color codes for rating technical evaluation factors and past performance shall be incorporated into all PEPs.

Rating System for Evaluation of Technical/Management Factors.

| Color | Rating | Definition |
|--------------|----------------|--|
| Blue | Superior | Exceeds the requirements in a way which yields significant benefits to the government; weaknesses, if any, are of small impact and NO significant weaknesses or deficiencies. |
| Green | Satisfactory | Meets all requirements; proposal offers no significant benefits beyond the stated requirements yet NO significant weaknesses or deficiencies exist. |
| Yellow | Marginal | Fails to meet minimum requirements or has one or more significant weaknesses. Deficiencies and significant weaknesses are correctable without major revisions to the proposal. |
| Red | Unsatisfactory | Fails to meet the requirement; one or more deficiencies for which correction would require a major revision or redirection of the proposal. |

Rating System for Evaluation of Past Performance.

| Color | Rating | Definition |
|--------------|----------------|---|
| White | No Rating | The offeror has no relevant past performance. |
| Blue | Superior | One or more examples where past performance significantly exceeded requirements. |
| Green | Satisfactory | Past performance met requirements. |
| Yellow | Marginal | One or more examples where past performance failed to meet requirements due to fault of contractor. |
| Red | Unsatisfactory | One or more examples where past performance |

significantly failed to meet requirements due to fault of contractor.

6. **Evaluation Worksheets.** Each PEP must contain evaluation worksheets. Evaluation worksheets are used to document the results of individual and team evaluations. Sample worksheets are shown in Enclosure (7). Worksheets must be tailored to meet the needs of the particular procurement.
7. **Review and Approval.** Before the SEB Chair approves the PEP, the SEB legal advisor shall review the document to ensure:
 - a. All evaluation factors and subfactors are included and correspond to the evaluation factors and subfactors in the SP and the RFP, if available.
 - b. Evaluation standards do not exceed the Government's minimum requirements as stated in the specification or RFP and that additional minimum requirements have not been added.
 - c. Standard definitions and ratings comply with this instruction.
 - d. Evaluation procedures comply with this SOP and applicable procurement regulations including the FAR, TAR, and CGAP.

K. Requests For Proposals. RFPs are used in negotiated acquisitions to communicate the Government's requirements to prospective contractors and to solicit proposals from them. The RFP should include only the minimum requirements necessary to meet the Government's need for a specific acquisition, and contain the information necessary to enable prospective offerors to prepare proposals properly and expeditiously. The Contracting Officer shall prepare the RFP using the uniform contract format prescribed by FAR 15.204-1.

1. **Incorporating Comments.** The Contracting Officer must consider all comments received (internal and external) in response to draft specifications and solicitations. A complete record of all comments received and the disposition of those comments should be retained in the contract file. When requested by the Contracting Officer, the PM or requiring office, Commandant (G-LPL), and any other office involved in the procurement shall assist in addressing comments. After making all necessary changes to the draft RFP, the Contracting Officer shall forward the final RFP to the SEB for review.
2. **Review and Approval.** Although the Contracting Officer makes the final decisions regarding the content and structure of the RFP (with the exception of Section M where those decisions are made by the SSA), the SEB Chairperson shall approve the RFP. If the SEB Chairperson is the Contracting Officer, the approving official must be at least one level above the Contracting Officer. Prior to SEB Chair approval, the SEB and the legal

advisor shall review the RFP to ensure it:

- a. Requests sufficient information and conforms to the requirements of the SP.
- b. Emphasizes factors that support the program objectives and the acquisition strategy.
- c. Contains sufficient performance requirements and schedule data to allow offerors to properly estimate and schedule the required work.
- d. Includes a discussion of known or potential risks, if there is reason to believe that offerors are unaware of such risks.
- e. Has been determined to be legally sufficient.

- L. Commerce Business Daily Synopsis.** As required by law and FAR Subpart 5.2, a synopsis of the procurement must be published in the CBD at least fifteen days before issuing the solicitation. Although discussed here as the last step in the pre-solicitation phase, the Contracting Officer typically publishes a synopsis well in advance of the 15 day requirement. Contracting Officers shall refer to FAR Subpart 5.2 for instructions on preparing a synopsis.

CHAPTER 5. SOLICITING INDUSTRY

- A. Introduction.** The solicitation phase (Phase Two) begins when the solicitation, also known as the Request for Proposal (RFP), is issued to private industry and ends when proposals are received from offerors. During this time, many activities may occur that require some involvement by the SEB, advisors, or team evaluators. Table 5-1 lists the events that typically occur during this period.

| SOLICITATION ACTIVITIES | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| ACTIVITY | RESPONSIBILITY | ASSISTED BY |
| RFP Issued | KO | KS |
| Receiving Questions from Industry | KO | KS |
| Responding to Questions | KO | Others as Approved by the SEB Chairperson |
| Amending the Solicitation | KO | KS |
| Pre-Proposal Conferences | KO | SEB |
| Site Visits | KO | SEB |
| NOTE: Acronyms are defined in Appendix A | | |

TABLE 5-1

- B. Issuing the RFP.** The Contracting Officer releases the RFP to industry. An RFP may be issued in hard copy or electronically. Once an RFP is issued, the Coast Guard, by regulation must allow industry at least 30 days (45 days for contract actions categorized as research and development) to submit their responses (i.e., proposals), more time may be required for complex procurements (e.g., subcontracting requirements, technology, etc.). The appropriate amount of time provided to industry to prepare proposals is determined in the acquisition planning phase.

C. **Questions from Industry.** Industry will inevitably have questions concerning the RFP. All questions (contractual, technical, or otherwise) must first come to the Contracting Officer. **Requiring offices, PMs, and sponsors must direct all questions from industry, regardless of how innocuous or innocent they appear, to the Contracting Officer.** This is an important control for two reasons. First, all potential offerors must receive the same information. Second, the Contracting Officer must amend the RFP to incorporate any changes resulting from questions. Section L should contain a deadline for the submission of written questions sometime before the receipt of proposals. Late questions should still be considered but no answer is required prior to the due date for proposals. When establishing the deadline, consider the time prospective offerors need to review the RFP and submit questions; the time the Contracting Officer needs to coordinate responses; and finally, the time industry needs to incorporate responses into their proposals.

D. **Responding to Industry.**

1. **Coordinating the Response.** As questions are received, the Contracting Officer may need assistance outside of the SEB in responding to questions. Approval of the SEB Chairperson or the SSA, as appropriate, should be requested to obtain this assistance. Generally, these questions will be of a technical nature. PMs and requiring offices must ensure that a qualified individual is available to answer questions; otherwise, the Contracting Officer may be forced to extend the due date for the receipt of proposals until such questions can be answered. The Contracting Officer may also require the assistance of other source selection organization members, such as the legal advisor or the cost/price evaluation team, in responding to questions.
2. **Responding to Questions.** The Contracting Officer must respond to all questions in writing. Questions and answers shall be issued as an RFP amendment (see paragraph E below).

E. **Amending the RFP.**

1. **General.** An amendment is a change to the terms or conditions of the RFP. The Contracting Officer is the only individual authorized to amend the RFP. Contracting Officers must ensure that amendments are issued with sufficient time to allow potential offerors to assess and incorporate any changes to their proposal.
2. **Changes to Section M.** Changes to the evaluation factors (Section M) should be held to a minimum as such changes may be perceived as favoring one offeror over another. Further, any substantive changes to the evaluation factors requires SSA approval before the Contracting Officer amends the RFP. Proposed changes to evaluation criteria or factors shall be transmitted to the SSA by the SEB Chairperson as an amendment to the SP (see Chapter 4, paragraph I.5., entitled, Changes to the

Selection Plan). The SEB must ensure that the appropriate portions of the Proposal Evaluation Procedures (PEP) are revised to reflect changes to Section M.

3. **Extensions To Proposal Due Date.** When a request is received to extend the time for the submission of proposals, the Contracting Officer must ensure that the request receives prompt attention. If the extension is granted, the RFP must be amended to reflect the revised due date. If the RFP is not amended, the Contracting Officer must promptly notify the requester to ensure the company has ample time to meet the established due date.

F. Pre-Proposal Conferences. A pre-proposal conference to brief prospective offerors may be conducted after a solicitation is issued but before proposals are received. The decision to conduct a pre-proposal conference is made in the acquisition planning phase and documented in the acquisition plan. If a pre-proposal conference is planned, Section L of the RFP should notify potential offerors of its planned date, time, and location together with instructions on submitting questions to be addressed during the conference. When scheduling the conference, the Contracting Officer must allow potential offerors sufficient time after issuance of the RFP to become familiar with the RFP requirements yet not schedule the conference too late to allow meaningful use of the information obtained at the conference.

1. **Responsibilities.** When a pre-proposal conference is scheduled the Contracting Officer, in conjunction with the SEB, must:
 - a. Appoint an individual(s) to make the arrangements for physical resources (e.g., conference rooms, projectors, etc.) and security (including ingress and egress of contractors).
 - b. Appoint an individual(s) to draft the agenda and prepare briefing materials.
 - c. Appoint an individual(s) to conduct appropriate portions of the conference.
 - d. Ensure the recorder is present to document all issues discussed during the conference.
2. **Questions From Industry.** Section L of the RFP should contain instructions to offerors on submission of questions to the Contracting Officer. Normally, these instructions contain a deadline for the receipt of written questions which is generally a few days before the date of the pre-proposal conference. This permits time for preparation of written answers to the questions and distribution of the answers at the conference. It is extremely important that all prospective offerors receive exactly the same information on the questions and answers so that all will be competing on the same basis.

3. **Record of the Conference.** A record of all information provided at the conference, including the written agenda, view graphs and questions and answers, shall be provided to all companies on the solicitation mailing list. If, as a result of the pre-proposal conference, the RFP changes, the Contracting Officer must issue a formal amendment to the RFP.

G. Site Visits. When service work is required at a Coast Guard installation, potential offerors will want to examine the work site before submitting a proposal. Similar to a pre-proposal conference, the need for site visits should be determined early in the acquisition planning stages. If a pre-proposal conference is conducted at the work site, this may be a good time to conduct a site visit. If a pre-proposal conference is not conducted, the Contracting Officer and PM/requiring office must decide how to conduct the site visit. Two options are available. The Coast Guard can schedule one site visit for all potential offerors, or the Coast Guard can have offerors arrange for site visits on an individual basis. The first option is preferred since it is the least disruptive and ensures potential offerors receive the same information. If one site visit is conducted, the Contracting Officer, in conjunction with the SEB must assign responsibilities for arranging and conducting the visit similar to a pre-proposal conference. If individual site visits are permitted, the Contracting Officer, in conjunction with the SEB, must determine who will escort visitors to the site and how visits will be scheduled (e.g., daily, weekly, mornings, afternoons, etc.). If site visits are required, Contracting Officers shall insert into Section L FAR Provision 52.237-1 - Site Visits, and inform potential offerors of the scheduled date of the visit or instruct them on how to arrange for such a visit. When scheduling a site visit, Contracting Officers should consider the time potential offerors need before the visit to review the RFP and the time needed after the visit to incorporate information obtained during the visit into their proposals. If, as a result of the site visit, RFP requirements change the Contracting Officer must amend the RFP.

CHAPTER 6. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND THE AWARD/COMPETITIVE RANGE DECISION

A. Introduction. The evaluation of proposals is an ongoing process that starts upon the receipt of proposals and normally concludes with the evaluation of Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs). This chapter discusses the activities of Phase 3 (Proposal Evaluation) and Phase 4 (Award/Competitive Range Decision. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the activities of Phase 5 (Discussions) and Phase 6 (Final Proposal Revisions).

B. Receipt of Proposals.

1. **Recording Proposals.** Upon receipt of proposals Contracting Officers shall log and record proposals following the security procedures in the procurement's Proposal Evaluation Procedures (PEP) (see Enclosure (7)). Once logged, the Contracting Officer shall separate technical and cost proposals and review each proposal to ensure:
 - a. It meets the solicitation's format and content requirements.
 - b. Page limitations were observed, if applicable.
 - c. Certifications and representations are completed.
 - d. Technical proposals contain no cost or price information.
2. **Securing Proposals.** The Contracting Officer, with the assistance of the Security Officer, shall secure proposals in the area(s) designated in the PEP's security procedures.

C. Convening the Evaluation Teams. Once proposals are received, logged, and reviewed, the PEAG Chairperson(s) shall convene the evaluation teams. The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Advise evaluators that proposals are received.
2. Review the PEP's security procedures stressing the statutory prohibitions against disclosing source selection and proprietary information and the requirements for safeguarding proposals.
3. Have evaluators sign the Conflict of Interest/NonDisclosure of Information Certification (see Enclosure (7), Appendix (7)).
4. Review the evaluation process.
5. Review the oral presentation process, if this technique is utilized.

SOP 24, Source Selection Procedures

6. Establish target due dates for team reports on the initial proposal review (see paragraph E below) and team evaluations.
7. Ensure each evaluator has a copy of the solicitation, all amendments, and the PEP.
8. Distribute proposals.

D. Convening the SEB. Shortly after the evaluation teams have been briefed, the SEB Chairperson shall convene the SEB. The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Advise SEB members that proposals have been received and identify offerors and proposed subcontractors.
2. Review security procedures including the importance of the nondisclosure of source selection and proprietary data.
3. Have SEB members sign the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure of Information Certification (see Enclosure (7), Appendix (7)).
4. Inform members of the target completion dates for the initial proposal review and proposal evaluation.

E. Initial Proposal Review. The first step in the evaluation is an initial review of proposals to ensure offerors provided sufficient information to evaluate. This review, conducted by the evaluation teams and the Contracting Officer or PEAG Chairperson(s), should be completed within five working days after the receipt of proposals. The number and size of proposals will impact this target date. Based on the initial review, the Contracting Officer may eliminate a proposal from further consideration if it is determined to be grossly deficient. A grossly deficient proposal is one that is totally unacceptable on its face and would require an extensive rewrite before it could be considered for evaluation. If proposals are found grossly deficient, the Contracting Officer shall notify the SEB. Following notification, the Contracting Officer shall immediately notify those offerors whose proposals were determined unacceptable. If the elimination of proposals leaves only one remaining proposal, the SSA must approve continuing the procurement as a sole source negotiation. If the SSA approves the action, the source selection organization is dissolved. Another option is to cancel the procurement and re-address the requirements to ensure competition is obtained.

F. Initial Evaluations. Following initial proposal review, evaluators shall begin a detailed evaluation of proposals. If oral presentations are utilized, the schedule for offerors to present is determined and offerors are notified. As determined by the Contracting Officer, the necessary evaluators shall convene for each offeror's oral presentation. Technical and cost evaluations are conducted concurrently but independently. Throughout the proposal and/or oral presentation evaluation process, the two most important points to remember are: (1) the need to adhere

strictly to the evaluation criteria set forth in the RFP and (2) the need to follow the evaluation and rating methodology set forth in the PEP. (Note: In the following discussion, the term “proposal” is used synonymously with “oral presentation.”)

1. **Technical Evaluations.** The technical evaluation team evaluates proposals to determine how well each offeror’s proposal meets the RFP requirements and to assess the risks associated with the proposed approach. Listed below are the component tasks of this evaluation.
 - a. Independent Evaluations. Technical evaluators shall independently evaluate proposals following the procedures in the PEP. Such an evaluation involves:
 - 1) Identifying and documenting the strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies of each proposal against the requirements of the RFP. These terms are defined in Enclosure (7) and shall be incorporated into each PEP.
 - 2) Identifying and documenting areas requiring clarification.
 - 3) Identifying and documenting the risks associated with the proposal; and
 - 4) Rating both the proposal’s merits and risks based on the results of the above evaluations.
 - b. Consensus Meeting. After proposals have been independently evaluated and rated, evaluation team members shall meet and form a team rating for each proposal. Evolving from the independent ratings, the team ratings are based on a consensus of each proposal’s merits (strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies) and evaluated risks. If a consensus cannot be reached, evaluators in disagreement with the majority opinion may prepare a dissenting report following the procedures in the PEP.
 - c. Evaluation Reports. Using the results of the consensus meeting, the evaluation team chairperson shall prepare a report of the team’s findings. The PEP shall stipulate the format and content requirements of the technical report. Individual evaluator worksheets, the team’s evaluation worksheets, and any dissenting reports shall accompany the report.
2. **Price/Cost Evaluation.**
 - a. Proposal Evaluation. The evaluation of cost or price proposals is usually conducted concurrently with the technical evaluation. The evaluation of cost/price shall follow the procedures in the PEP. Generally analysis of proposed costs or price will result in judgments concerning the completeness, reasonableness, and realism of proposed costs or prices. If addressed in the solicitation, cost/price evaluation may also include

life cycle costs, the relationship of proposed costs or price to the technical approach, the most probable cost to the Government, and associated cost or price risk. Unlike the technical evaluation, cost/price proposals are not rated.

- b. Cost Realism Analysis. If other than cost and pricing data is required to perform a cost realism analysis, the Contracting Officer shall not request offerors to certify this data. Whenever a cost realism analysis is conducted, the cost evaluation team shall also conduct a price analysis to ensure that the overall price offered is fair and reasonable.
 - c. Report. The cost/price evaluation team chairperson shall prepare an evaluation report summarizing the team's findings. The report shall follow the format specified in the PEP. If appropriate, the report shall also include any additional information resulting from the cost/price analysis (e.g., responsibility issues) to assist the Contracting Officer in making the competitive range determination.
- 3. **Progress Meetings**. The PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer should schedule regular meetings with individual evaluators to assess their progress and ensure their evaluations comply with the requirements of the PEP. During these meetings, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer should review individual evaluation findings to ensure the narratives are clear and to identify gross discrepancies among evaluators. If gross discrepancies exist among evaluators, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer should investigate to ensure all evaluators clearly understand the Government's requirements and offerors' proposals. If evaluators clearly understand the Government's requirements and offerors' proposals, evaluators shall resolve differences in evaluation findings in the consensus meeting following the procedures in the PEP.

G. **Exchanges with Offerors**. After proposal evaluation, FAR part 15.306 allows the Contracting Officer to initiate communication (exchanges) with offerors to obtain very specific and limited information. These exchanges with offerors are:

- a. Clarifications and award without discussions. These are limited exchanges that may occur when award without discussions is contemplated. Offerors may be given the opportunity to clarify certain aspects of proposals or to resolve minor or clerical errors. The aspects of proposals that are subject to clarifications are those which would not be subject to a proposal revision, such as past performance or the results of some form of a quality audit.
- b. Communications with offerors before establishment of the competitive range. These are limited discussions for the purpose of addressing issues that must be explored in order to determine whether or not a proposal should be placed in the competitive range. These exchanges are not to be conducted with all offerors and per FAR 15.306(b)(1) are limited to:

- 1) Offerors whose past performance information is the determining factor preventing their inclusion in the competitive range.
- 2) Offerors whose inclusion in or exclusion from the competitive range is uncertain.

These exchanges may be conducted to enhance understanding of proposals; allow reasonable interpretation of proposals; or facilitate the Coast Guard evaluation process. They may address ambiguities in the proposal; other concerns (perceived deficiencies, weaknesses, errors, omissions, or mistakes); information relating to relevant past performance; and adverse past performance information upon which the offeror had not had a previous opportunity to comment. These exchanges shall not provide an opportunity for an offeror to revise their proposal.

H. SEB Report/Presentation.

1. **SEB Report.** Using the results of the evaluation reports, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or the Contracting Officer, shall prepare the SEB report. The purpose of the report is to support the Contracting Officer's determination of the competitive range. The PEP shall outline the minimum contents of the report. This report satisfies the prenegotiation memorandum requirement of TAM 1215.406-170. Once completed, the board recorder shall distribute the report to all SEB members and the appropriate SEB advisors following the PEP's security procedures. To ensure the SEB is provided sufficient time to conduct a meaningful review, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer should allow the SEB at least three working days to review the report.
2. **SEB Presentation.** The PEAG Chairperson(s) or the Contracting Officer, with the assistance of each evaluation team chairperson, shall, if requested by the SEB, present the evaluation team results. The PEP should specify the format and content of the brief.
3. **SEB Review and Approval.** The SEB shall review the SEB report and identify any inconsistencies in the evaluation of proposals or unsubstantiated ratings. The PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer shall incorporate required changes into the SEB report.
4. **Award/Competitive Range Recommendation.** Based upon the results of the evaluation, the SEB must decide whether to recommend an award without discussions or provide a competitive range recommendation to the Contracting Officer. The PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer shall incorporate the SEB's recommendation into the SEB report.

- a. Award On Initial Offers. The SEB should carefully deliberate the recommendation to award on initial offers because considerable time and money can be saved by omitting discussions. Per FAR 15.306, award may be made on initial offers if the solicitation states that the Government intends to evaluate proposals and make award without discussions. The circumstances allowing for award on initial offers will vary with each procurement. **However, it is the policy of the Office of Contract Support (G-ACS) to award on initial offers whenever circumstances allow for it.** Clearly, when the proposal, with the highest overall evaluation also offers the lowest cost/price; has no deficiencies that requires correction; and takes no exceptions to the RFP's terms or conditions, the SEB should recommend to the SSA that an award be made based on initial offers, provided the solicitation included the appropriate FAR provision. However, award on initial offers shall not be made under the following circumstances:
 - 1) When discussions have been conducted with one or more offerors.
 - 2) If correction of a suspected mistake prejudices the interest of other offerors. See FAR 15.306 for guidance on resolving suspected mistakes.
 - 3) Whenever there is uncertainty as to the pricing or technical aspects of any proposal.
 - b. Competitive Range Recommendation. If award is not made on initial offers, the SEB must provide the Contracting Officer with a competitive range recommendation. The SEB shall consider the guidance in FAR 15.306(c). Additional guidance is also provided below in paragraph J., entitled, Competitive Range Determination.
- I. Awarding On Initial Offers. If award on initial offers is feasible, the SEB shall present its findings to the SSA following the procedures in Chapter 9, entitled, Source Selection.
 - J. Competitive Range Determination. In consultation with the SEB and based upon its written recommendation, the Contracting Officer must make a written determination of the competitive range before discussions begin. The Contracting Officer shall follow the guidance in FAR 15.306(c) in making this determination. The objective of the competitive range determination is not to eliminate proposals but to facilitate competition by conducting written or oral discussions with only those offerors who have the most highly rated proposals.
 - K. Single Offeror In Competitive Range. The SSA must approve any competitive range determination resulting in inclusion of a single proposal. Before making a competitive range determination of one, the Contracting Officer should consult with their legal advisor.

L. Notifying Unsuccessful Offerors. The Contracting Officer shall promptly notify in writing an unsuccessful offeror that its proposal is no longer eligible for award. If this notification is to an offeror who was in the competitive range, then it shall occur within three (3) days after the date of contract award. When notifying unsuccessful offerors, the Contracting Officer shall follow the requirements of FAR 15.503.

M. Preaward Debriefing of Unsuccessful Offerors

1. FAR 15.505 provides for debriefing of unsuccessful offerors excluded from the competitive range or otherwise excluded from the competition before award.
 - a. Offerors may request a debriefing by submitting a written request to the Contracting Officer within 3 days after receipt of notice of exclusion from the competition.
 - b. At the request of the offeror, the debriefing may be delayed until after contract award. Note FAR 15.506.
 - c. If the offeror does not submit a timely request, they are not entitled to either a preaward or postaward debriefing.
2. The Contracting Officer shall make every effort to debrief unsuccessful offerors as soon as practicable, however, for reasons determined in the best interests of the government, the Contracting Officer may delay the debriefing until after contract award. In this case, the information at FAR 15.506(d) shall be provided no later than the time postaward debriefings are provided. The rationale for the delayed debriefing shall be documented in the official contract file.
 - a. At a minimum, preaward debriefings shall include;
 - 1) The agency's evaluation of significant elements in the offeror's proposal
 - 2) A summary of the rationale for eliminating the offeror's proposal; and
 - 3) Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and agency procedures were followed in eliminating the proposal from the competition.
 - b. Preaward debriefings shall not disclose:
 - 1) The number of offerors;
 - 2) The identity of other offerors;
 - 3) The content of other offerors' proposal;
 - 4) The ranking of other offerors;
 - 5) The evaluation of other offerors; or

SOP 24, Source Selection Procedures

- 6) Any of the information prohibited in FAR 15.506(e).
3. If an offeror receives a pre-award debriefing they may not receive a post-award debriefing, and their protest clock begins with the debrief.

CHAPTER 7. EXCHANGES AFTER ESTABLISHING THE COMPETITIVE RANGE

- A. **Introduction.** If award cannot be made on initial offers, proposal evaluation moves into Phase 5: Exchanges after establishment of the competitive range. During this phase, the Contracting Officer conducts discussions with all offerors within the competitive range.
- B. **Purpose** The purpose of discussions is to:
1. Resolve any remaining uncertainties in the cost, technical, or management proposals.
 2. Resolve any exceptions taken by an offeror to the solicitation, including terms, conditions, delivery schedules, etc.
 3. Advise the offeror of deficiencies and significant weaknesses in its proposal so that the offeror is given an opportunity to satisfy the Government's requirements.
- C. **Conducting Discussions.**
1. **Responsibility.** The Contracting Officer conducts discussions with offerors. Evaluation team members and the SEB legal advisor may also participate in discussions at the request of the Contracting Officer. Individuals involved in discussions must recognize that the Contracting Officer shall control discussions and is the sole point of contact with offerors.
 2. **Policy. The Contracting Officer shall conduct written discussions and offerors shall provide written responses to discussion issues.** This policy reduces the possibility of inadvertently modifying the solicitation and also provides a written record of all communication. This policy however does not preclude the Contracting Officer from discussing issues with offerors orally.
 3. **Procedures.**
 - a. **Notifying Offerors.** Contracting Officers must notify all offerors within the competitive range by letter and provide them with the discussion issues. Contracting Officers shall provide offerors a reasonable amount of time to submit revisions to their proposals resulting from discussions. The amount of time offerors need will vary with each procurement. However, to ensure all offerors are treated equally, Contracting Officers shall provide an equal amount of time for all offerors to respond to discussion issues. The items requiring discussions are those issues approved by the SEB and provided to the Contracting Officer in the SEB report.
 - b. **Oral Discussions.** In some acquisitions, deficiencies and uncertainties are numerous or complicated. In such cases the Government may benefit from face-to-face

discussions. Under these circumstances, the Contracting Officer shall notify offerors of discussion issues as required by paragraph 3.a., above and include the place and time for discussions. The Contracting Officer must also determine how offerors may respond to discussion issues. Two options are available. Contracting Officers can request that offerors respond in advance of the scheduled meeting so that evaluators have an opportunity to review responses, or Contracting Officers may require offerors to follow up with written confirmation of the issues addressed during oral discussions. Regardless of the method, Contracting Officers must receive written responses from offerors before the request for Final Proposal Revisions to ensure discussions are meaningful, uncertainties are resolved, and to minimize any surprises in FPRs.

- c. Agenda. Before conducting oral discussions with any offeror, the Contracting Officer, with the assistance of the SEB, shall develop a written agenda for the meeting. At this meeting the Contracting Officer shall define each Government participant's role and the issues each Government participant shall discuss. During discussions the following rules apply:
 - 1) The Contracting Officer controls all discussions.
 - 2) No discussions shall be held with any offeror unless the Contracting Officer is present.
 - 3) In discussing deficiencies, uncertainties, or suspected mistakes, the Government shall not suggest answers.
 - 4) Government personnel must not reveal the costs/prices or contents of competing proposals.
 - 5) Government personnel shall not discuss the strengths or weaknesses of other offers, or technical information or ideas of other offers.
- d. Reviewing Responses. When written responses to discussion issues are submitted, the Contracting Officer shall request the appropriate evaluation teams to review the responses to determine that discussions were meaningful and that discussions are effectively complete.

D. Scope of Discussions

- 1. **Types of Discussions**. Federal Acquisition Regulation 15.306 provides for exchanges with offerors in three separate and distinct instances. Chapter 6, Paragraph G., discussed two instances of exchanges with offerors that occur before the establishment of the competitive range. The third instance of exchanges with offerors is after the establishment of the competitive range. These are exchanges that

are undertaken with the intent of allowing the offerors to revise their proposals, and are known as negotiations or discussions. The primary purpose of discussions is to obtain from each offeror in the competitive range their best value, based on the requirement and the evaluation factors in the solicitation. Accordingly, discussions are held with all offerors in the competitive range and are tailored to each individual proposal. Discussions should address each offer's significant weaknesses, deficiencies, and other aspects of the proposal that could be changed to or explained to enhance the potential for award. These discussions apply to all areas of the proposal such as price or cost, technical approach, past performance, or terms and conditions. Negotiations may include bargaining, which encompass persuasion, alteration of assumptions and positions, and give-and-take. Bargaining may be applied to price, schedule, technical requirements, type of contract, or other terms of the proposed contract.

2. **Limitations on Discussions.** FAR 15.306(e) specifically prohibits engaging in behavior during exchanges that:

- a. Favors one offeror over another.
- b. Reveals an offeror's technical solution. This includes any information, which would compromise an offeror's intellectual property to another offeror.
- c. Reveals an offeror's price without that offeror's permission. This does not prohibit the Contracting Officer from informing the offeror that their price is considered too high or too low, and revealing the results of the analysis leading to this conclusion. The Contracting Officer may also reveal what the Coast Guard considers a reasonable price as long as it is revealed to all offerors.
- d. Reveals the names of individuals providing past performance reference information.
- e. Knowingly furnishes Source Selection Information.

E. **Requests for Final Proposal Revisions.** The request of FPRs concludes Phase 5, Exchanges After Establishment of the Competitive Range. The Contracting Officer shall normally not reopen discussions upon the receipt of FPRs.

CHAPTER 8. FINAL PROPOSAL REVISIONS

- A. **Introduction.** If award has not been made on initial offers the final phase of proposal evaluation is the request for and evaluation of Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs).
- G. **Requesting FPRs.** The Contracting Officer shall request FPRs **from all offerors remaining within the competitive range.** In extreme cases, Contracting Officers may request FPRs orally but shall confirm this request in writing. Exhibit 8-1 lists the information the request for FPRs must contain. To expedite the evaluation of FPRs, Contracting Officers should also consider requesting that offerors submit revisions to their proposals on colored paper. This request facilitates the identification of changes to proposals.

ELEMENTS OF A FPR REQUEST

Notice that discussions are concluded and further discussions prior to award are not contemplated.

Notice that FPRs are requested in writing and that the government intends to make award without obtaining further revisions.

A common cutoff date and time specified for receipt of FPRs.

Notice that FPRs are subject to the Late Proposals and Revisions portion of the “Instructions to Offerors – Competitive Acquisition” provision of the solicitation.

Notice that offerors must confirm the validity of their latest proposal or submit their FPR by the common cutoff date.

Notice that changes not fully substantiated may have a negative impact on the evaluation of the offerors proposal.

Notice that changes in the FPR must be identified and traced back to the latest previous offer especially in regard to the cost proposal.

Notice that exceptions taken to the Government’s requirements may result in a negative evaluation.

Notice that only information submitted in the proposal or as a result of the request for Final Proposal Revisions will be evaluated and considered in making the source selection.

Exhibit 8-1

C. Receiving FPRs.

1. **Securing FPRs.** The Contracting Officer shall receive, log, and secure FPRs following the same procedures as the original proposals.
2. **Late FPRs.** FPRs must be received by the exact date and time specified by the Contracting Officer in the request for FPRs unless the offer meets one of the conditions as per FAR Provision 52.215-1(c)(3) - Instructions to Offerors – Competitive Acquisition.

D. Evaluating FPRs.

1. **Reconvening the Evaluation Teams.** After receipt of FPRs, the PEAG Chairperson(s) shall reconvene the appropriate evaluation teams. Because the request for FPRs merely provides offerors the opportunity to revise their proposals, offerors may choose not to submit a revised proposal. In such cases, the SSA is presented with the results of the SEB's initial evaluation findings.
2. **Evaluating FPRs.** The evaluation teams shall evaluate FPRs following the PEP. FPRs shall be evaluated solely on the evaluation criteria specified in the solicitation or corresponding amendments. The evaluation of FPRs does not require a reevaluation of the entire proposal. Evaluators shall only evaluate revisions made as a result of the request for FPR.
3. **Evaluation Reports.** Upon completing the evaluations, evaluation team chairpersons shall prepare and submit revised evaluation reports, if any, to the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer. Reports shall be prepared following the requirements of the PEP.

- E. Reopening Discussions.** In unusual cases, the Contracting Officer may need to conduct discussions with offerors after receipt of FPRs. Contracting Officers shall not reopen discussions after receipt of FPRs unless fully justified in writing and approved by the SEB and the SSA. However, the Contracting Officer may reopen discussions for administrative purposes and request FPRs without the approval of the SSA provided the SEB unanimously agrees. Whenever, the Contracting Officer reopens discussions, another round of FPRs shall be requested.

CHAPTER 9. SOURCE SELECTION

A. SEB Report.

1. **Preparing the Final SEB Report.** Using the evaluation team's findings, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer, with the assistance of the evaluation teams, shall draft the final SEB report. The PEP shall discuss the minimum contents of this report (see enclosure (7)). The Final SEB Report shall satisfy the price negotiation memorandum requirement of TAM 1215.406-170.
2. **Distributing the Final SEB Report.** Once completed by the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer, the board recorder shall distribute the draft SEB report to the SEB members. SEB members shall have at least three working days to review the report.
3. **SEB Briefing.** If requested by the SEB, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer, with the assistance of the evaluation team chairpersons, shall brief the SEB on the results of the final evaluation. This brief should follow the format and content requirements of the SSA brief as specified in the procurement's proposal evaluation procedures (PEP).
4. **SEB Review and Meeting.** After each member has reviewed the SEB report, the SEB should meet to discuss any concerns regarding the report or the evaluation findings and to provide any necessary changes. SEB members should provide recommended and required changes in writing. This procedure should minimize misunderstandings between the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer and the SEB and expedite submission of the final SEB report.
5. **Finalizing the SEB Report.** The PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer shall make all necessary changes to the final SEB report. Once completed, the PEAG Chairperson(s) or Contracting Officer shall personally obtain the signatures of the SEB members on the final report.
6. **Source Selection Decision Memoranda.** Enclosure (8) suggests a format for a Source Selection Decision memorandum. A Source Selection Decision Memorandum shall be prepared for each offeror within the competitive range and submitted to the SSA with the final SEB report. This memorandum documents the source selection decision and the best value determination for the signature of the SSA (see paragraph D., entitled, Documenting the Selection Decision).
7. **Submission to the SSA.** The SEB Chairperson shall submit the final SEB report to the SSA and, as applicable, concurrently provide copies to the CAMP.

B. SSA Presentation.

1. **Scheduling the Presentation.** The SEB Chairperson is responsible for scheduling the SSA briefing. The SEB Chairperson should arrange for this briefing shortly after the draft SEB report has been completed. Two weeks before the scheduled SSA briefing or upon scheduling the

briefing, whichever is later, G-ACS shall prepare a white digest for G-A identifying the scheduled date and time of the briefing. Commandant (G-A) will provide this information to the Administration Acquisition Executive (AAE).

2. **Preparing Briefing Materials.** The SEB Chairperson shall identify the individuals responsible for preparing briefing materials.
3. **Review of Briefing Materials.** The SEB Chairperson shall review all briefing materials in advance. If required by the SEB Chairperson, a dry run presentation should be held at least two days in advance of the scheduled presentation.
4. **Presentation to the SSA.** The SEB Chairperson shall make the presentation to the SSA. Presentations by other SEB or evaluation team members shall be assigned by the SEB Chairperson. All SEB members and the SEB legal advisor shall attend the briefing. Attendance by SEB advisors and other members of the source selection organization is at the discretion of the SEB Chairperson.

C. **Source Selection.** The SSA makes the selection decision. The SSA has a great deal of discretion in making the selection. Historically, the Comptroller General has not normally overturned a selection decision unless there was no rational basis for the decision, or if RFP evaluation factors were not followed. A decision would be without rational basis if there is no rational basis in applicable law or if the SSA has exercised his or her discretion “in an abusive, unlawful or irrational manner.” Such would be the case if an applicable statute or regulation was violated or if there was no substantial evidence in the record on which the SSA could base his or her determination.

1. **Significance of Evaluation Ratings.** The findings, ratings, and recommendations of the evaluation teams or the SEB do not bind the SSA provided that the SSA has a rational basis for a differing evaluation. Given a rational basis, the SSA is free to re-rate proposals, using the evaluation criteria in the RFP, provided his/her reasons for the re-rating are fully explained. In addition to the final SEB report, the SSA may solicit advice from any source to reach a selection decision. The final award decision should not be based upon the *color* coding and other ratings alone; rather, it should be based upon the relative strengths, weaknesses, and risks of competing proposals.
2. **Consistency with RFP Evaluation Factors.**
 - a. When making a selection decision the SSA may not alter the relative importance of the factors stated in the RFP. If the SSA fails to follow the RFP evaluation factors, the decision will most likely be overturned if protested.
 - b. In acquisitions where the evaluation factors are listed in descending order of importance and weights are not disclosed in the RFP, the SSA has broad discretion. The trade off between price/cost, technical evaluation, past performance, and other considerations still must be

supported by the established evaluation factors, but the RFP and SP afford maximum flexibility to the SSA in making the selection decision.

- D. Documenting the Source Selection Decision.** As stated in Enclosure (3), paragraph J, Relationship of Cost/Price to the Other Categories, the ultimate trade off in a best value source selection is the one between cost/price and the other evaluation categories. This trade-off entails deciding whether any marginal advantages that an offer may have in terms of technical/management, past performance, or other evaluated considerations are worth any marginal difference in cost or price. In preparing the source selection decision, for the SSA's signature, the Contracting Officer shall set forth the rationale for the selection decision. The narrative shall, include the rationale for any business judgments and tradeoffs made by the SSA. The SEB Chairperson shall submit the decision documentation to the SSA for signature.
- E. Presentation to the Commandant/Vice Commandant.** After the SSA advises G-A that the decision has been made, G-A and the SSA will jointly brief the Commandant/Vice Commandant (G-C/CV), as needed. After this joint briefing is conducted, G-ACS will announce contract award using the procedures outlined in CGAP Subchapter 1205.303 and Chapter 10, Contract Award and Debriefing.

CHAPTER 10. CONTRACT AWARD AND DEBRIEFING

- A. **Introduction.** Once the SSA selects an offeror for contract award, the Contracting Officer should award the contract as promptly as practicable. However, per FAR 1.602-1, “no contract shall be entered into unless the Contracting Officer ensures that all requirements of law, executive orders, regulations, and all other applicable procedures, including clearances and approvals, have been met.” This chapter highlights the more important actions that must be completed before and after contract award. Although these requirements are discussed after the source selection decision, the Contracting Officer should begin some of these actions before the selection is made.
- B. **Preparing the Contract.** The Contracting Officer should ensure that the contract to be awarded is ready for execution within three working days of the SSA’s decision. To meet this time constraint, Contracting Officers should request that offerors submit signed contract documents with their FPRs. The SEB legal advisor shall review the contract(s) before its execution.
- C. **Notification In Small Business Set-Asides.** In a small business set aside, **after the selection is made, but prior to award**, the Contracting Officer shall inform each unsuccessful offeror, in writing, of the name and location of the apparent successful offeror. Notices shall be prepared following FAR 15.503(a)(2).
- D. **Public Announcement.** Contracting Officers shall prepare public affairs notifications following TAM 1205.303(a). These notifications shall be processed in accordance with CGAP Subchapter 1205.303(a)(2) (see PFN 01-02). When providing a copy of DOT F 4220.41, entitled, Contract Award Notification, to the Office of Public Affairs (G-IPA), the Contracting Officer shall advise G-IPA to refrain from releasing any information about the proposed contract award to the public until after the Contracting Officer actually awards the contract and notifies them that it is appropriate to release such information.
- Contracts valued at \$3 million or more shall **not** be distributed (although the Contracting Officer may sign the contract) nor any information released to any source outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT) (except in the case of the small business notification (see paragraph C., above)) regarding the selection decision until the Assistant Secretary for Government Affairs (I-1) has advised the Contracting Officer that the contract may be released. Upon receiving authorization from I-1, G-ACS shall obtain authorization from G-C/CV to proceed with contract award **and** notify the successful and unsuccessful offerors.
- E. **Awarding the Contract.** The Contracting Officer is the only individual authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the United States. Contracting Officers shall follow the procedure at FAR 15.504 when making formal contract award. A contract, signed by both the Government and the successful offeror, may serve as the written notice of award.

- F. Notifying Unsuccessful Offerors.** Within three (3) days after the award of the contract, the Contracting Officer shall notify all unsuccessful offerors whose proposals were in the competitive range following the requirements of FAR 15.503(b). Prompt postaward notification is required to ensure unsuccessful offerors have an opportunity to submit a protest.
- G. Notifying Office of Public Affairs.** After G-ACS notifies the successful and unsuccessful offerors, G-ACS shall inform G-IPA that it is appropriate for that office to disseminate contract award information to the public.
- H. Synopsizing Contract Award.** Contracting Officers shall synopsize contract awards in the Commerce Business Daily as required by FAR 5.301. When applicable, the synopsis shall include a statement identifying the contract as one containing Public Law 95-507 subcontracting plan and goals.
- I. Post-Award Debriefings.** Per FAR 15.506, when a contract is awarded on the basis of competitive proposals, offerors, **upon their written request**, shall be debriefed and furnished the basis for the selection decision and contract award.
1. **Procedures.** The Contracting Officer shall conduct debriefs in accordance with FAR 15.506. Enclosure (9) provides a suggested opening statement for Post Award debriefs.
 2. **Participants.** Participants in a debriefing are, at a minimum, the Contracting Officer, an individual actually responsible for the evaluation, and legal counsel. If necessary, other SEB participants may be involved but only to the extent required by the circumstances of the debrief. Contracting Officers should prepare an agenda for each debrief and review that agenda in advance with those involved in the debrief. The Contracting Officer shall advise participants of information that cannot be discussed or disclosed in a debrief.
 3. **Requirements.** The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (FASA) of 1994 imposed new requirements on conducting postaward debriefings.
 - a. **Requirements.** An offeror that requests a debriefing within three days of being notified of the award, must be debriefed by the agency, to the maximum extent practicable, within five days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays) of the agency receiving the request. At a minimum the debrief shall include:
 - 1) The agency's evaluation of the significant weaknesses or deficiencies in the offeror's proposal, if applicable;
 - 2) The overall evaluated cost or price and technical rating, if applicable, of the successful offeror and the debriefed offeror;

- 3) The overall ranking of all offerors when any ranking was developed by the agency during the source selection;
 - 4) A summary of the rationale for the award;
 - 5) For acquisitions of commercial end items, the make and model of the item to be delivered by the successful offeror; and
 - 6) Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities were followed.
- b. Restrictions. In accordance with FASA, debriefings may not include point by point comparisons of the debriefed offeror's proposal with those of other offers. Furthermore, debriefings shall not reveal any information exempt from release under the Freedom of Information Act including:
- 1) Trade Secrets;
 - 2) Privileged or confidential manufacturing processes and techniques;
 - 3) Commercial and financial information that is privileged or confidential, including cost breakdowns, profit, indirect cost rates, and similar information; and
 - 4) The names of individuals providing reference information about an offeror's past performance.
- c. Records. If, within one year after contract award, a protest causes an agency to issue a new solicitation or a new request for FPRs on the protested contract award, the agency shall make available to all prospective offerors:
- 1) Information provided in any debriefings conducted on the original award about the successful offeror's proposal, and
 - 2) Other nonproprietary information that would have been provided to the original offerors.
4. **File Documentation**. Per FAR 15.506(f), the Contracting Officer shall include a summary of the debriefing in the contract file.

J. Lessons Learned Memorandum. The SEB Chairperson shall ensure a lessons learned memorandum is prepared within 90 days after contract award. The lessons learned memorandum shall discuss what did and did not work well throughout the source evaluation and selection process.

The memorandum should also contain suggestions for improving the process and any other information that may benefit future SEBs. To ensure items in the beginning of the process are not overlooked, lessons learned should be documented throughout the source selection process.

K. Retention of Records. The Contracting Officer shall retain all original documents pertaining to formal source selection procedures as part of the contract file. The types of documentation retained will vary with each procurement, however, FAR 4.803 provides examples of the records that are normally contained in contract files. At a minimum contract files shall comply with the requirements of FAR 4.801.

SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Source Selection Authority (SSA). The SSA is responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of the entire source selection process. The SSA has, subject to law and applicable regulation, full responsibility and authority to select the source(s) for award and approve the execution of the contract(s). The SSA's responsibilities include:

1. Reviewing and approving the SP in writing, including any subsequent change to the evaluation criteria or acquisition strategy.
2. Ensuring that the SEB and any established oversight boards are properly constituted and include all the necessary disciplines;
3. Obtaining required conflict of interest documentation from the SEB Chairperson and other established oversight board chairpersons, providing that documentation to legal counsel for review, and ensuring that the documentation is safeguarded;
4. Approving any course of action before the acquisition proceeds when only one offeror remains (e.g., if only one submits a proposal or the SEB recommends only one offeror be included in the competitive range);
5. Approving the necessity to call for more than one round of Final Proposal Revisions after the conclusion of exchanges;
6. Ensuring against premature or unauthorized disclosure of source selection information;
7. Approving a change of board chairpersons when necessary; and
8. Making the final selection decision(s).

B. Source Evaluation Board (SEB). SEB responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring an in-depth review and evaluation of each proposal against the solicitation requirements, the evaluation criteria stated therein, and the approved evaluation plan;
2. Transmitting to the Contracting Officer identified areas for clarification, weaknesses, deficiencies, or other items for discussions;
3. Providing recommendations to the Contracting Officer regarding release of any amendments to the solicitation;
4. Providing recommendations to assist the Contracting Officer in making the competitive range

determination;

5. Using sound business judgment to provide the SSA with a sound basis for making an informed and objective decision on the offeror(s) to receive award;
6. Providing briefings and consultations as required by the SSA;
7. Reviewing procurement documentation such as the acquisition plan, selection plan, and proposal evaluation plan, and providing recommendations to the SEB Chairperson;
8. Participating, as requested by the SEB Chairperson, in any presolicitation and/or pre-proposal conferences;
9. Reviewing the solicitation and providing recommendations to the SEB Chairperson prior to its release;
10. Reviewing and approving the final SEB report; and
11. Participating in debriefings to unsuccessful offerors as directed by the SEB Chairperson or Contracting Officer.

C. SEB Chairperson. The SEB Chairperson's responsibilities include:

1. Exercising oversight of all procedural and administrative aspects of the SEB;
2. Making final decisions on all issues for which the SEB is divided and for which the Contracting Officer is not otherwise responsible;
3. Scheduling and conducting SEB meetings;
4. Ensuring that all SEB members are familiar with the provisions of this SOP;
5. Briefing SEB members, evaluation team members and advisors on the sensitivity of the SEB process, the prohibition against unauthorized disclosure of information (including their responsibility to safeguard proposals and any documentation related to SEB proceedings), and the requirements pertaining to conflict of interest;
6. Ensuring all SEB members have completed and submitted to their Cognizant Ethics Official a Confidential Disclosure Report (OGE Form 450), and consulting with cognizant ethics officials on potential conflicts of interest of SEB members.
7. Obtaining required conflict of interest certifications from SEB members, evaluation team members, and advisors, and providing that documentation to legal counsel for review and

- ensuring that documentation is safeguarded;
8. Ensuring the Procurement Integrity Act provisions contained in FAR and TAR are followed;
 9. Appointing chairpersons of evaluation teams and ensuring that the evaluation teams are briefed early in the process on their responsibilities before commencing a review of the proposals;
 10. Ensuring that the board recorder prepares minutes of the SEB meetings and that those minutes are made available to each SEB member and accurately reflect the activity of meetings;
 11. Replacing SEB members, evaluation teams members and advisors when necessary;
 12. Recommending, with the advice and guidance of the other SEB members, to the Contracting Officer those offerors to be included in the competitive range;
 13. Forwarding, for the signature of the SSA, the decision documentation providing the SSA's decision rationale;
 14. Preparing and presenting a "Lessons Learned" memorandum or briefing to the Chief of the Contracting Office or the Head of the Contracting Activity (if deemed necessary by the SEB Chairperson or the Chief of the Contracting Office or the Head of the Contracting Activity) after source selection has been accomplished;
 15. Directing the activities of the board recorder and security officer;
 16. Serving as the point-of-contact for written/oral communication between the SSA and other source selection organization members;
 17. Authorizing the use of SSA approved consultants by the PEAG or evaluation teams;
 18. Reviewing and approving the Proposal Evaluation Plan;
 19. Reviewing and approving the RFP prior to its release;
 20. Reviewing and approving SSA briefing materials; and
 21. Coordinating the activities of the PEAG or evaluation teams through the PEAG/evaluation team Chair/Co-Chairs.

D. Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG).

1. **PEAG Chair/Co-Chairs.** The PEAG Chair/Co-chairs responsibilities include:

- a. Exercising corresponding responsibility for the PEAG as the SEB Chairperson does for the Source Evaluation Board
- b. Consolidating team evaluation reports and preparing the SEB reports;
- c. Preparing and providing briefings to explain team findings when requested by the SEB; and
- d. Acting as the point-of-contact(s) between the evaluation teams and the SEB.

2. PEAG Evaluation Team Chairpersons. The team chairpersons responsibilities include:

- a. Exercising corresponding responsibility for the team as the SEB Chairperson does for the Source Evaluation Board;
- b. Consolidating the evaluation team's findings and preparing evaluation reports as required by the PEP;
- c. Preparing and providing briefings to explain team findings when requested by the SEB;
- d. Consolidating their respective evaluation team's findings and preparing evaluation reports as required by the PEP; and
- e. Acting as the point-of-contact between the evaluation team and the PEAG Chair/Co-chair.

3. PEAG Evaluation Team Members. Team member responsibilities include:

- a. Assisting the SEB in the evaluation process through providing specialized expertise (e.g., quality assurance, pricing, technical, business/management);
- b. Evaluating proposals, following the approved PEP, and submitting findings (including clarifications, weaknesses, deficiencies, and other items for discussions) in writing to the Team Chairperson;
- c. Ensuring proposals and evaluation comments in their possession are safeguarded;
- d. Drafting appropriate portions of the Proposal Evaluation Plan (PEP);
- e. Participating, as directed by PEAG chairperson(s), in presolicitation and/or pre-proposal conferences;
- f. Evaluating proposals following the approved PEP;
- g. Assisting the team chairperson in preparing evaluation reports and briefing materials;

- h. Assisting in discussions with offerors when requested by the Contracting Officer;
- i. Participating in SEB and SSA briefings as required by the SEB and or PEAG Chairperson(s);
and
- j. Assisting in debriefings when requested by the Contracting Officer.

E. Contracting Officer (KO). The Contracting Officer is responsible for performing the whole range of contracting functions stipulated by the Federal Acquisition Regulations. The list below highlights the Contracting Officer's functions, and is provided to educate members of the Source Selection Organization on the vital functions the Contracting Officer performs throughout the procurement cycle. Contracting Officer responsibilities include:

1. Formulating the acquisition strategy and preparing the acquisition plan (AP).
2. Preparing the nomination and appointment letters.
3. Preparing the SP with the assistance of the PM or the requiring office.
4. Conducting presolicitation and pre-proposal conferences.
5. Preparing and transmitting sources sought announcements and Commerce Business Daily publications.
6. Preparing and issuing the RFP and any subsequent amendments.
7. Acting as the single point of contact between industry and the Coast Guard once the solicitation has been released.
8. Establishing and documenting the competitive range.
9. Requesting Preaward surveys.
10. Conducting and controlling all discussions.
11. Requesting Final Proposal Revisions.
12. Obtaining all necessary approvals and clearances.
13. Preparing and issuing the notifications to unsuccessful offerors.
14. Signing and entering into contracts on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Enclosure (1) to SOP 24

15. Debriefing unsuccessful offerors.

F. SEB Recorder. Board recorder responsibilities include:

1. Attending all SEB meetings and serving as the assistant to the SEB chairperson.
2. Preparing, distributing, and maintaining the minutes of meetings. Minutes shall include the date, time, location, and purpose of meeting, a list of attendees, record all SEB decisions, and action items assigned.
3. Distributing copies of SEB material such as the RFP, SP, PEP, and evaluation reports.
4. Scheduling all SEB meetings, briefings, conferences, etc.
5. Notifying appropriate personnel of the time and location of SEB meetings, briefings, conferences, etc.
6. Preparing and distributing the agenda for SEB meetings, briefings, conferences, etc.
7. Arranging for office resources such as computers, file cabinets, door/file locks, keys, and shredders.
8. Coordinating with the Security Officer on the adequacy of work areas and storage facilities.
9. Arranging for clerical and graphic support.
10. Arranging for the return of office resources at the conclusion of the SEB.
11. Performing other tasks as assigned by the SEB Chairperson.

G. Security Officer. Security Officer responsibilities include:

1. Enforcing the provisions of the security plan.
2. Assisting the SEB Chairperson in indoctrinating source selection members on security issues.
3. Safeguarding conflicts of interest and nondisclosure statements until forwarded to the SSA and/or legal counsel.
4. Arranging for secure work areas and storage facilities and assisting the board recorder in obtaining secure conference rooms.
5. Shredding all unnecessary SEB materials.

H. Advisors.

1. Contract Specialists. Performs all contracting functions as directed by the Contracting Officer.
2. Legal Counsel.
 - a. Provides legal advice and counsel to the SEB. Legal advice should be sought on any matter where business judgment might be influenced by legal considerations.
 - b. Reviews draft source selection documentation such as the RFP, SP, PEP, competitive range determination, etc.
 - c. Reviews the RFP, subsequent amendments, and the contract for legal sufficiency prior to issuance/award.
 - d. When requested by the Contracting Officer, reviews proposed correspondence to offerors.
 - e. Reviews the final SEB report for legal sufficiency.

CONDUCTING SEB ORIENTATION

- A. **Introduction.** This appendix provides guidelines for conducting the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) orientation meeting. Typically the attendees at this meeting are SEB members, advisors, the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG) Chairperson(s), and evaluators. For brevity, this appendix refers to all attendees as SEB members.
- B. **Scheduling of Initial Meeting.** The SEB Chairperson should schedule the initial planning meeting at least two weeks in advance. When scheduling the meeting, a notice should be sent to each attendee with a copy of the meeting agenda, this instruction, and any other appropriate information.
- C. **Briefing by the SEB Chairperson.** During this initial meeting the SEB Chairperson should brief SEB members on the following issues:
1. **SEB Processes.** Describe the responsibilities and functions of the source selection organization and provide an overview of the source selection process and its objectives.
 2. **Conflicts of Interest and Procurement Integrity.** Review the policies relating to conflicts of interest and the nondisclosure of procurement information.
 - a. **Conflict of Interest/Non Disclosure of Information Certification.**
 - 1) SEB members must prepare and submit a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 450) to their cognizant Ethics Officer.
 - 2) SEB members shall certify (using the memorandum shown in Attachment (1) to this enclosure) to the SEB Chairperson that their Financial Disclosure Report has been appropriately filed. This certification shall be accomplished at the SEB orientation.
 - 3) Upon receipt of proposals, SEB members shall re-certify that the member does not have a conflict of interest with any of the contractors, subcontractors, teaming partners, etc.
 - 4) The SEB Chairperson will investigate any potential conflict of interest seeking appropriate opinions from various support staffs, including but not limited to G-LPL and G-LGL. The SEB Chairperson will also ensure that all conflicts of interest are appropriately resolved.
 - b. **Procurement Integrity.** The legal representative from Commandant (G-LPL) or the SEB Chairperson should review the provisions of Section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (as amended). Copies of FAR 3.104 should be provided to SEB members.

- D. Overview of Acquisition History and Objectives.** Depending upon how familiar SEB members are with the procurement or project, the PM or requiring office may want to brief SEB members on the procurement's history, objectives, unique features, and potential problem areas, if any.
- E. Overview of Acquisition Strategy and Milestones.** If the Acquisition Plan (AP) has been approved, the SEB Chairperson or Contracting Officer, may want to review the acquisition strategy, including proposed contract type, small business considerations, proposed streamlining initiatives, etc. At this time, the SEB Chairperson or Contracting Officer may want to review the milestones established in the AP.
- F. Responsibilities.** Using the established milestones, the SEB Chairperson may want to highlight those milestones that require SEB member participation. For the benefit of first time SEB members, the SEB Chairperson may want to provide an average time frame for completing certain milestones (e.g., days, weeks, months). Typical SEB responsibilities include, although are not limited to:
1. Reviewing and commenting on presolicitation documentation such as the Selection Plan, specifications, the Proposal Evaluation Plan, and the solicitation.
 2. Participating in presolicitation conferences, preproposal conferences, site visits, etc.
 3. Reviewing and approving SEB evaluation reports and making a competitive range recommendation to the Contracting Officer.
 4. Participating in SSA briefings.
- G. SEB Review and Approval.** The SEB Chairperson or Contracting Officer should establish ground rules for reviewing procurement documentation. It is recommended that the Contracting Officer provide SEB members with sufficient time to conduct a meaningful review. The amount of time needed will depend on the documentation. However, to ensure documentation is reviewed expeditiously and efficiently, SEB members should provide advance written comments to the contracting officer. Advance comments will enable the Contracting Officer to consolidate duplicate comments, identify controversial issues, and time permitting, generate suggested changes. To the maximum extent possible, the SEB should review and comment on procurement documentation one time.
- H. Concluding the Meeting.** The meeting should close with a date and time for the next meeting. If procurement documentation is available for review, it should be distributed and a deadline established for written comments.

Attachment (1)

Memorandum

From: Insert Name of SEB Member
To: Chairperson Source Evaluation Board

Subj: CONFLICT OF INTEREST/NOT-DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION
CERTIFICATION

2. In accordance with the current laws, regulations directives and instructions pertaining to conflicts of interest, I hereby certify that:

a. Based on my current status, I have executed an OGE 450 Confidential Disclosure Report and submitted it to my Ethics Officer.

b. I have or will promptly notify the SEB Chairperson of any real or apparent situation or affiliation that may constitute a conflict of interest under referenced laws, regulations, directives, and instructions.

c. Neither I nor any member of my household have any interest in or affiliation with any individual, firm or organization which may benefit from the outcome of this source selection. I understand the offerors and any primary subcontractors involved in the acquisition are:

(To Be Completed Upon Receipt of Proposals)

3. I further certify that I understand my obligations and responsibilities under the applicable laws, regulations, directives and instructions not to discuss, divulge or otherwise disclose any information, procedure, correspondence, documentation, evaluation or other data pertaining to this acquisition, except as approved by the Contracting Officer, or as otherwise authorized by law.

4. I understand that this certification will be made part of the source selection record and the official contract file and does not relieve me of the responsibility for any other disclosures or certifications requirement required by law, regulation or other directive.

Enclosure (2) to SOP 24

5. The use of this form has been authorized by the Source Selection Authority limited to those evaluation or selection officials who are otherwise required to file an OGE 450, Confidential Disclosure Report.

(SIGNATURE)

By direction

Note: The names and the number of offerors and subcontractors are Source Selection Sensitive Information

DEVELOPMENT OF EVALUATION FACTORS

A. Introduction. A critical task assigned to the Project Manager's (PM) staff or the requiring office is the development of evaluation factors. Evaluation factors are those aspects of an offeror's proposal that are evaluated to assess the offer that best meets the Government's requirements. The selection of evaluation factors and their relative importance is a matter of agency discretion. This discretion must be exercised with care as award must be based on these evaluation factors and subfactors. Per FAR 15.304(c), there are no restrictions on the kinds of evaluation factors that may be used for any given procurement provided:

1. Price or cost shall be evaluated;
2. Quality is addressed through the consideration of one or more non-cost evaluation factors;
3. Past performance is evaluated;
4. For solicitations involving bundling that offer a significant opportunity for subcontracting:
 - a. A factor is included to evaluate past performance indicating the extent to which the offeror attained applicable goals for small business participation under contracts that required subcontracting plans.
 - b. A factor is included to evaluate proposed small business subcontracting participation in the subcontracting plan.
5. For unrestricted acquisitions over \$500,000, the extent of participation of small disadvantaged business concerns in performance of the contract in the authorized NAICS Industry sub-sector shall be evaluated (but see 19.201(b) and 19.1202-2(b) for limitations).

B. Overview. The key in selecting evaluation factors is determining which factors represent the major goals of the procurement as well as the major areas where there are likely to be significant differences between good and poor performing contractors. The use of a large number of evaluation factors drawn from all parts of the specification is discouraged. Experience has shown that such an approach results in unnecessarily elaborate proposals, lengthy evaluations, and obscures the differences between competitors.

C. Evaluation Categories. There are four broad types of evaluation categories within which evaluation factors are normally developed and subsequently arranged in their relative order of importance.

1. **Technical.** This category indicates, for each offeror, the merit or excellence of the work to be performed or product to be delivered. It assesses how well the offeror can be expected to meet mission requirements and includes, as appropriate, both technical and management factors.
2. **Relevant Experience and Past Performance.** This category considers the amount and quality of previous work accomplished by the offerors comparable to the work to be performed under the instant procurement.

3. **Cost/Price.** This category evaluates proposals for reasonableness and realism. On a case by case basis, other factors may be evaluated in this category.
4. **Other Considerations.** This category includes those considerations other than the three categories listed above that can affect contract performance. It includes, but is not limited to, such items as: financial condition, labor relations, small and small disadvantaged business considerations, and geographic distribution of subcontracts.

D. General Guideline for Developing Evaluation Factors. The selection of evaluation factors will depend on the specific nature of a procurement. The guidelines below should be considered when generating evaluation criteria.

1. **Consistency.** Evaluation factors must agree with the specification and other stated requirements. Once developed, factors must be accurately described in the SP and incorporated into Section M of the solicitation. The evaluation factors and the specifications must accurately identify the basis for the Government's measurement of how well each proposal meets the Government's requirements.
2. **Limited In Number.** Avoid the tendency to generate too many evaluation factors. Generally, four to five factors within an evaluation category are sufficient to conduct a thorough and meaningful evaluation. A large number of factors dilutes the relative importance of the most significant factors. A simple analogy may be the purchase of an automobile. When buying a car, a horn is a requirement, but how often do you base your selection decision on the sound of the horn. Also, having a very large number of factors may create overlap and waste valuable time during the evaluation phase. Eliminate those factors which are not important enough to influence the selection decision.
3. **Independence.** Select evaluation factors that do not overlap one another. For example, "evidence of successful completion on similar projects" and "applicable project experience" are nearly the same factor. Either eliminate redundant factors **or** consolidate them.
4. **Relevance.** An evaluation factor may be valid (i.e., measure what is it supposed to measure) without being relevant **to** the source selection. For example, in a procurement for services, manufacturing experience is irrelevant. Hence, when developing evaluation factors, ask, "does this factor really belong in the evaluation?"
5. **Can Be Measured or Validated.** An evaluation factor should not measure who has the best proposal writer or can make the best promises. Pick factors that include solid evidence and firm, specific commitments.

E. Technical Category.

1. **Developing Technical Factors.** The PM's staff/matrix or requiring office is responsible for developing the technical evaluation factors. Listed below are suggested steps for completing this task.

- a. Step One: Read the Specification. Thoroughly read and understand the specification. When reading the specification ask yourself:

- 1) "What is the procurement's objective?"
- 2) "In what acquisition phase is this procurement?"
- 3) "What areas of the specification give significant latitude for offerors to develop unique approaches?"
- 4) "In what areas of the specification are significant variations in quality or efficiency expected?"
- 5) "What attributes must an offeror possess to successfully perform the contract?"

- b. Step Two: Research Previous Contracts. Obtain copies of evaluation factors used in similar procurements. A review of "lessons learned" from previous SEBs and discussions with former SEB or evaluation team members may also provide valuable information. When referring to previous evaluation factors or "lessons learned", questions to ask include:

- 1) "How do the acquisition objectives of this procurement compare (i.e., similarities and differences) to these previous efforts?"
- 2) "How much competition did the agency receive on prior procurements?"
- 3) "Have contract administrators experienced trouble with these previous contracts?"
- 4) If a factor was the subject of a previous protest, examine it to determine if wording can be improved or clarified.
- 5) "How significantly did the factor affect the source selection?"

The goal in researching factors is to identify evaluation factors that may apply to the instant procurement. This approach saves time and also benefits from the successes or failures of other procurements. However, it is extremely important that the PM's staff or requiring office **DO NOT** blindly use previous evaluation factors. Such an action could be fatal to the procurement and, more importantly, to the mission objective.

- c. Step Three: Select Factors. Meet with the other individuals responsible for developing the evaluation factors to brainstorm and document ideas. During this brainstorming session, individuals should compare their answers to the questions in steps one and two above and select only those factors that will impact on the selection decision. Although specific evaluation factors will vary with each procurement, some typical factors are listed in Attachment (1) to this enclosure.
- d. Step Four: Select Subfactors. Once the evaluation factors are established, it may be necessary to develop subfactors. Subfactors are developed when a factor, by itself, is too

broad to measure key aspects of the proposal. In such cases, it may be necessary to develop two or more subfactors for each evaluation factor. For example, a factor such as “Technical Approach” for a computer system may be broken down into the subfactors for “hardware installation plan”, “software installation plan”, “network services and maintenance plan”, etc. When selecting subfactors, follow the steps used for selecting factors.

2. **Determining the Relative Importance.** After choosing the evaluation factors and subfactors, the next step is deciding the relative importance among the factors (i.e., prioritizing what factors, if any, are more important than other factors). Similar to the selection of factors and subfactors, the relative importance of selected factors and subfactors will significantly impact the selection decision. If the relative importance of factors and subfactors inaccurately reflects the Government’s needs, the SSA may select a proposal which is not the most advantageous in fact. When deciding what factors, if any, are more important than others consider the following steps:
 - a. Step One: Ask the Question. Review the evaluation factors and subfactors and ask, “If the Government could evaluate only one factor/subfactor, which one would that be?”
 - b. Step Two: Consider the Answer. If the answer to the question posed above in Step One is, “All of the factors/subfactors are equally important.” Go to step three. If the answer reveals there is/are predominately more important factor(s) and subfactor(s), list those factors in their order of importance.
 - c. Step Three: Expressing Relative Importance. Once the relative importance of factors and subfactors is established, it must be expressed by a priority or trade off statement. Priority or trade off statements relate the importance of one factor to another or to all others. Include language which states, at a minimum, whether all evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are – (1) Significantly more important than cost or price; (2) Approximately equal to cost or price; or (3) Significantly less than cost or price. **Under no circumstances will numerical weights be used to rank the relative merits of evaluation factors and subfactors (e.g., points assigned to each factor/subfactor).**
3. **Developing Assessment Criteria.** Whereas the evaluation factors and subfactors represent the subject matter to be evaluated, the assessment criteria denote the qualities the Government is looking for in a proposal.
 - a. Selection of Criteria. Attachment (1) lists examples of various assessment criteria. Generally, only two or three criteria should be selected. The selection of these criteria should follow the general guidelines above in paragraph F.I., entitled, Developing Technical Factors.
 - b. Relative Merit. Similar to assigning the relative importance of evaluation factors and subfactors, if one of the assessment criteria impacts the selection decision more than another, this must be reflected in a priority/trade-off statement.

4. **Evaluation Matrix.** Evaluation factors and criteria provide a two dimensional matrix that identifies and interrelates what is to be evaluated. Such a matrix visually portrays the interrelationship and relative merit of the various factors, subfactors and criteria. The matrix also serves as the basis for developing the color coded rating charts used during the SEB and SSA briefings. Factors, subfactors and criteria are depicted on the matrix chart in descending order of importance.

F. Past Performance.

1. **Background.** Past performance is a mandatory evaluation factor in all competitively negotiated solicitations expected to exceed \$100,000. The evaluation of past performance is mandated by law to improve the competitive procurement process by selecting contractors with superior performance records rather than contractors with superior proposal writers. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy published, “A Guide to Best Practices for Past Performance” to assist agencies in implementing this new procurement initiative. Below are highlights from the guide of suggested and required practices:
 - a. Address past performance as a separate factor in your evaluation, not as a subfactor under other factors. (This SOP suggests past performance as a separate evaluation category).
 - b. Make it clear in the solicitation that past performance is being used as an evaluation factor.
 - c. References requested in the solicitation must be for ongoing work with more than a year of performance or work completed within the past three years.
 - d. Past performance criteria must state that Federal, as well as, state and local Government, and private contracts for similar work can be used as references.
 - e. The solicitation should include a statement that the Government may use other sources of past performance information other than the sources identified by the offeror.
 - f. Past performance should be equal to or more important than any other non-cost/price factor.
 - g. In the case of an offeror without a record of relevant past performance or for whom information on past performance is not available FAR 15.305(a)(2)(iv) states that the offeror may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on past performance.
2. **Developing Factors.** The PM’s staff, with the assistance of the Contracting Officer, shall develop the past performance evaluation factors. Attachment (2) lists sample past performance evaluation factors. The steps in selecting and weighting evaluation factors for past performance are similar to the steps in selecting and weighting technical evaluation factors (see paragraph E., entitled, Technical Category). Individuals developing these factors should also review the “Best

Practices Guide”.

- G. **Developing Cost/Price Evaluation Factors.** Cost or price is a mandatory evaluation factor in every procurement. The Contracting Officer and a Cost/Price Analyst from the Office of Contract Support (G-ACS) develop the cost/price evaluation factors with the assistance of the PM’s staff. Attachment (2) lists sample cost/price evaluation factors that may be appropriate in an RFP. Not all of the factors listed are necessarily applicable to all procurements; nor is the listing intended to be all inclusive or restrictive.
- H. **Other Considerations.** This category includes all factors considered important by the SSA in making the selection decision that do not fit into one of the other three categories (i.e., technical, cost/price, or past performance). The RFP must specifically identify other factors to be considered in the source selection. Attachment (2) lists factors that may be included in this category. Since the factors in this category may combine both technical and contract considerations, typically, the PM’s staff and the Contracting Officer develop these factors together.
- I. **Relationship of Cost/Price to the Other Categories.** The ultimate trade off in a best value source selection is the one between cost/price and the other evaluation categories. This is often referred to as the price or cost/technical trade-off. The trade-off entails deciding whether any advantages that an offer may have in terms of technical/management, past performance, or other evaluated considerations are worth any difference in cost or price. The FAR requires cost or price be considered in every source selection (formal or informal). Cost/price shall be related to the other evaluation categories by a priority or trade-off statement, (see Paragraph E.2, entitled, Determining the Relative Importance).

ATTACHMENT (1)

SAMPLE TECHNICAL EVALUATION FACTORS FOR SOURCE SELECTION

Depending on the complexity of a procurement, evaluator may divide this evaluation category into two subcategories: Technical and Management. Examples of technical factors are listed below. The following page lists examples of management factors.

Technical Factors:

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Reliability | Effectiveness | Support Hardware |
| Maintainability | Schedule Compliance | Engineering Plan |
| Producibility | Committed Resources | |
| Availability | Implementation | |
| Technical Data/Documentation | Payload Capability | |
| Overall Size and Weight | Structural Integrity | |
| Power Consumption | Command and Control | |
| Environmental Range/Limits | Mock ups | |
| Shielding Techniques | Fire Control | |
| Shock Resistance | Navigation/Guidance | |
| Accuracy | Systems Engineering | |
| Speed of Operation | Management | |
| Man Portability | Spares | |
| Fail Safe Provisions | Automation | |
| Compatibility with | Armament | |
| Existing Equipment | Weapons Delivery Equipment | |
| Hardware Design | Convertibility | |
| Interfaces | Modernization | |
| Equipment Organization and | Integration and Assembly | |
| Logic Design | Integrated Logistics Support | |
| Equipment Operations | Software | |
| Characteristics | System Definition | |
| Control Consoles | Mission Capability | |
| Patching and Frames | Thread Capability | |
| Monitoring and Sensing | System Modes and States | |
| Communication Interface | System Functions | |
| Timing | System Functional Relationships | |
| Coordination | Configuration Allocation | |
| Testing Procedures | System Characteristics | |
| Expansibility | Physical Requirements | |
| Service Conditions | Environmental Limitations | |
| Program System and Support | Materials, Processes, and Parts | |
| Program Design | Workmanship | |
| Message Processing | Interchangeability | |
| Input Processing | Deployment Requirements | |
| Security Safe Guards | Human Performance/Human | |
| Routing | Engineering | |
| Message Accountability | System Effectiveness Models | |
| and Integrity | Processing Resources | |
| Speed of Service | Quality Factors | |
| Storage and Retrieval | Modifiability | |
| Output Processing | Portability | |
| Communications Procedures | Support Concept | |
| Training | Test Methods | |
| Installations | Test Constraints | |
| Basic Hardware | System Validation | |
| Data Management | Initial Capability | |
| Production Management | Demonstration | |
| Environmental Protection | Configuration Control | |

Enclosure (3) to SOP 24

Corrosion Control
Non-destructive Inspection
Standardization
Human Factors Engineering

Built In Test
Trade Studies
Design Life
Systems Test Plan

ATTACHMENT (1) Continued

SAMPLE TECHNICAL EVALUATION FACTORS FOR SOURCE SELECTION

Management Factors:

Organization and Management
Practices
Performance Analysis
Qualifications of Key Personnel
Facilities
Geographic Location
Manpower/Support Requirements
Subcontract Management
Quality Assurance
Inventory System
Support Facilities
Qualification Methods
Piece Part Control
Defect Control

Financial Management
Project Controls
Manufacturing Strategy
Schedule Management
Property Management
Make or Buy Program
Small Business Subcontracting
Master Plan and Scheduling
Production Capability
Manpower Allocation
Interface with Other Contractor
Programs
Plant Security
Work Definition and Organization

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Compliance with the Requirement: | Assesses the degree to which the offeror's proposals meets or exceeds RFP requirements. |
| Soundness of Approach: | Assesses how likely the proposed methodology/approach will be successful. |
| Understanding of the Requirement: | Assesses the degree to which an offeror's proposal demonstrates an understanding of the requirement. |
| Experience. | Assesses the depth, breadth, and scale of the offeror's experience with the proposed methodology/approach. |

ATTACHMENT (2)

**SAMPLE
COST/PRICE EVALUATION FACTORS
FOR SOURCE SELECTION**

Cost/Price Factors:

Completeness of Cost/Price Proposal

Compliance with the Service Contract Act (SCA)

Reasonableness of the Proposed Costs or Price

Realism of Proposed Costs or Prices
Life Cycle Costs Acceptability of Professional

Compensation Plan

Compliance with the RFP

**SAMPLE PAST PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FACTORS
FOR SOURCE SELECTION**

Past Performance:

Quality of Product or Service

Customer Satisfaction

Timeliness of Performance

Cost Controls

Cost Control

Notable Awards or Certifications

Business Relations

**SAMPLE
OTHER EVALUATION FACTORS FOR SOURCE SELECTION**

Other Considerations:

Results of Prototype Testing

Production Readiness

Corporate Priority on the Work

Labor Management Relations

Extent of Subcontracting with

Geographic Distribution of the

Small Disadvantaged Businesses

Work to be Performed

DEVELOPING RFP SECTIONS L AND M

- A. **General.** After the PM staff/matrix or requiring office develops the evaluation factors, the Contracting Officer can prepare RFP Section L - Instructions, Conditions, and Notices to Offerors and Section M - Evaluation Factors for Award. Sections L and M are for solicitation purposes only and are not incorporated into the contract award document. Accordingly, it is imperative that contract requirements are not included in these two sections of the RFP.
- B. **Section L.** Section L, “Instructions, Conditions and Notices to Offerors,” provides offerors with information they need to prepare their proposals. Section L contains many standard provisions required by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and also contains provisions specific to the procurement. One of the most important provisions of Section L is the “Submission of Proposal” provision. This provision tells offerors what information to submit with their offers and the required format for proposals.
1. **Information to Be Submitted.** The evaluation teams must determine what information they need from offerors in order to evaluate proposals properly. For each evaluation factor and subfactor, the evaluation team must identify the information they need to evaluate that factor or subfactor. When applicable, proposal instructions must also list the information offerors need to provide during oral presentations. When determining how much information is needed, remember that proposals (written or oral) cost money to prepare and require time to evaluate. The more information the Government requests, the more information the Government must evaluate. Therefore, ask only for that information necessary to accomplish the evaluation. To ensure offerors submit only that information which was requested, the Government should impose a page limitation on technical proposals.
 2. **Format of the Information.** The Government should require that offerors submit proposals in the same format as that in which the evaluation factors and subfactors are arranged in Section M. This format facilitates proposal evaluation. In addition, offerors shall be required to submit cost and technical proposals in separate volumes.
 3. **Award on Initial Offers.** Contracting Officers shall insert FAR Provision 52.215-1, Instructions to Offerors – Competitive Acquisitions, in all competitively negotiated solicitations. If award based on initial offers is anticipated, do not use Alternate I. If it is believed that exchanges with offerors following the establishment of the competitive range will occur consider using Alternate I. When Alternate I is used, award on initial offers is prohibited.
 4. **Other Provisions.** In addition to proposal preparation instructions, Section L contains other preaward information such as:
 - a. The time and date for a pre-proposal conference. This provision should also provide offerors with instructions on submitting questions.

- b. Scheduling site visits and FAR provision 52.237-1 -Site Visits.
- c. Deadline for submitting written questions.

C. Section M. Section M, Evaluation Factors for Award, provides the basis for contract award (e.g., The Government will select the proposal representing the most advantageous offer to the Government) and lists the evaluation factors for award. The evaluation factors in Section M shall be identical to the factors listed in the SP. In addition, per FAR 15.304:

1. All factors and significant subfactors that will affect contract award and their relative importance shall be clearly stated in the solicitation. In addition, the general approach for evaluation of past performance information shall be described.
2. The solicitation shall state whether all evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are:
 - a) Significantly more important than cost or price;
 - b) Approximately equal to cost or price; or
 - c) Significantly less important than cost or price.

D. Consistency. When preparing Sections L and M, the Contracting Officer must ensure that these two sections are consistent. For instance, the Government should not request information in Section L, that will not be evaluated in Section M. Conversely, Section M should not evaluate information that was not requested in Section L.

Sample Selection Plan

**SOURCE SELECTION PLAN
FOR**

ENTER TITLE OF PROCUREMENT
RFP DTCG23-XX-R-_____

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

A. Introduction.

1. **Description of the Procurement.** Briefly describe (no more than one page) the supply or service being acquired and how it will satisfy the Coast Guard's need(s). State if this action is for new equipment/services; replaces existing equipment or services; or a recompetes of a previous contract. Identify the acquisition phase. Identify the organization procuring the supply/service.
2. **Related or Planned Procurements.** Identify related procurements (planned or in-process) that support, impact, or are impacted by the proposed acquisition.
3. **Previously Approved Documents.** Identify all previously approved acquisition documentation that supports this procurement. Identify documents by title; case number, if applicable; and date approved. Documents to list include Mission Need Statements and Acquisition Plans.
4. **Period of Performance/Delivery Date and Government Estimate.** Identify the procurement's period of performance or delivery date and the total estimated cost.

B. Organization.

1. **Organization.** The Source Selection Organization will consist of the Source Selection Authority, the Competitive Acquisition Management Panel (CAMP) the Source Evaluation Board, and the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Groups (PEAG). The PEAG consists of a (identify the evaluation teams).
2. **Purpose.** Briefly describe the function each element of the organization will perform.
3. **Source Selection Organization Membership.** Identify by name and office symbol Source Selection Organization members and consultants.

SEB Chairperson.

CAMP Members

SEB Members.

SEB Advisors.

SEB Consultants (Identify Non-Government Employees and Company Affiliation).

Recorder.

Security Officer.

PEAG Chairperson(s))

PEAG Members

H. Schedule of Events. Attachment (1) lists the planned milestones applicable to this effort.

I. Evaluation Procedures. Incorporate or attach a copy of the proposed Section M of the RFP. Include all factors to be evaluated (e.g., technical, past performance, cost, etc.).

ATTACHMENT (1)
PROCUREMENT MILESTONES

| EVENT | PLANNED COMPLETION DATE |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Selection Plan Approved | |
| Presolicitation Conference | |
| List all other planned presolicitation activities | |
| CBD Issued | |
| RFP developed, reviewed by SEB, and issued | |
| Pre-proposal Conference/Site Visits | |
| Proposal Received | |
| Oral Presentations (if applicable) | |
| Technical Evaluations | |
| Cost Evaluations | |
| SEB Meeting | |
| Competitive Range Determined | |
| Demonstrations/Presentations | |
| Discussions | |
| Receive Final Proposal Revisions | |
| Technical/Cost Evaluations Complete | |
| SEB Meeting | |
| SEB Final Report to SSA | |
| Source Selection by SSA | |
| Contract Award | |

NOTE: This milestone chart must be tailored to reflect the major events of the individual procurement. It is expected that events will be added or deleted (such as pre-proposal conferences, site visits, vendor demonstrations, and presentations, etc.).



Memorandum

Subject: AMENDMENT TO SELECTION PLAN
FOR (IDENTIFY THE PROCUREMENT)

Date: 4200

From: SEB Chairperson

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: Source Selection Authority (SSA)

1. Amendment X to the (enter the procurement's name) Selection Plan is forwarded for your approval as required under Subchapter 1215.303-9(b) of the Coast Guard Acquisition Procedures. Amendment X (state the change to the SP (e.g., change in evaluation factors, substitution of SEB chairperson, etc.)). This change is necessary because (enter the reason for the change).
2. I recommend you approve the enclosed amendment.

NAME OF SEB CHAIRPERSON

APPROVED: _____

DISAPPROVED: _____

DATE

ENTER NAME OF SSA

Encl: (1) Amendment X to SP

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM -- AMENDMENT TO SELECTION PLAN

Sample Proposal Evaluation Procedures

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
(INSERT PROJECT NAME)
PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES
(PEP)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
(DTCG23-xx-R-xxxxxx)

(INSERT DATE)

OFFICE OF ACQUISITION
U.S. COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS
2100 SECOND STREET S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION—SEE FAR 3.104

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY:

Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG)
Co-Chairperson

Date

Contracting Officer

Date

APPROVED BY:

Source Evaluation Board (SEB) Chairperson

Date

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION—SEE FAR 3.104

A. Introduction

1. **Purpose.** This document describes the processes and procedures the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) and the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG) must follow in evaluating and rating proposals received in response to Request for Proposal (RFP) (insert the solicitation number). The identity and responsibilities of all participants involved in this evaluation and selection process follow. The evaluation procedures, including the documentation and reporting requirements are also described. **Do not deviate from these procedures. If inconsistencies are discovered, immediately contact the SEB Chairperson for guidance. If necessary, these procedures will be modified by written authorization from the SEB Chairperson.**
2. **Description of Product/Service.** Describe the product or service being procured. This description may be obtained from the Acquisition Plan.
3. **Special Features.** List any special features unique to this acquisition. Special features may include the use of non-government personnel in the evaluation process or presentations or demonstrations by offerors.
4. **Deviations.** List any deviations from the source selection process and provide the date approval was granted, identify the authority granting the deviation.

B. Source Selection Organization

1. **General Description.** The Source Selection Organization for the **(fill in the name of the acquisition)** has four organizational levels with unique responsibilities. The levels are: the Source Selection Authority (SSA); the Competitive Acquisition Management Panel (CAMP); the Source Evaluation Board (SEB); and the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG). Paragraph 2., entitled, Source Selection Organization, describes the responsibilities of these four levels. Appendix (1) identifies the SSO members.
2. **Source Selection Organization.**
 - a. The SSA is responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of the entire source selection process. The SSA has, subject to law and applicable regulations, full responsibility and authority to select the source(s) for award and approve the execution of the contract(s).
 - b. The CAMP is responsible for senior management oversight during the selection process. The CAMP reviews the actions of the SEB and offers advice to the SSA.
 - c. The SEB consists of qualified Government contracting, technical, and management personnel appointed by the SSA. The SEB directs and reviews the evaluation of proposals. The SEB consists of a chairperson, members, and advisors.

d. The Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG) consists of qualified Government contracting, technical, cost, and management personnel appointed by the SEB to develop the Proposal Evaluation Procedures (PEP) and to conduct a detailed evaluation of proposals. Listed below are the components of the PEAG and their respective responsibilities. [Note: The components listed below are examples of various evaluation teams for a formal source selection acquisition. The exact number and types of teams will vary to suit the needs of a particular acquisition.]

- 1) PEAG Chair/Co-Chairs. The PEAG Chair/Co-Chairs guide the evaluation teams through the evaluation process and are the conduit between the SEB and the evaluation teams. All information transmitted between the SEB and evaluation teams is reviewed and coordinated through the PEAG Chair/Co-chairs. The PEAG Chair/Co-Chairs also transmit information between the evaluation teams when such transmittal is proper.
- 2) Technical Evaluation Team (TET). This team conducts the detailed evaluation of the technical proposals with respect to technical and management considerations.
- 3) Cost/Price Evaluation Team (C/PET). This team evaluates the cost/price proposal (identify the type of proposal to be solicited).
- 4) Other. Identify other evaluation teams needed to complete the evaluation. Examples include a Safety Evaluation Team (SET), a Software Capability Evaluation Team (SCET), or a Past Performance Evaluation Team.

e. Consultants. (Use only when the SEB anticipates consultants will be needed). Consultants are individuals known for their expertise in a particular field. (Identify if such individuals are Government or non-government personnel. Identify the area of expertise for which the individual(s) will be needed.)

3. **Organization Rosters**. Appendix (1) lists the members of the Source Selection Organization. [Note: Any non-governmental personnel shall be identified.]

C. Schedule.

1. **Schedule**. Appendix (2) is a schedule of the major source selection events from approval of the PEP through contract award.

2. **Schedule Considerations**.

- a. The dates for completing the events in Appendix (2) may shift due to the following variables: the number of proposals received; length of time required to document the decision process; changes to the requirements during the solicitation process; and the availability of personnel resources assigned to the project.

- b. The Contracting Officer will monitor and report to the SEB potential schedule slippages.

D. Basis For Award.

1. **Basis for Award.** Using Section M of the RFP, state the basis for award (e.g., best value or technically acceptable/low price or cost).
2. **Award on Initial Offers.** State if this procurement allows for award on initial offers and identify the implementing FAR provision which will be incorporated into Section M of the solicitation.
3. **Evaluation Criteria.** Using Section M of the RFP, list the evaluation factors and subfactors (e.g., technical, management, cost, etc.) and the evaluation criteria against which each of the factors and sub factor are evaluated.

E. Evaluation Procedures and Documentation.

1. **Evaluation Procedures.** [Note: The evaluation procedures described here are those that are typically used in the formal source selection process. Actual procedures should be tailored to meet the needs of the particular acquisition and the source selection organization.] This section details the evaluation process and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the SEB, the PEAG, and the evaluation team members. Instructions on conducting the evaluation are provided to each evaluation team in Appendix (3) and (4) [Note: The number of evaluation plans will generally correspond to the number of evaluation teams.] Although not part of the evaluation process, this section also discusses the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the SSA Briefing.

Proposal evaluation is generally conducted in three steps. Step one is proposal evaluation, step two is discussions with offerors, and step three is the evaluation of Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs). Below is a description of the activities associated with each step. [Note: The purpose of this description is to educate SEB members, advisors, and PEAG members/evaluators on the source selection process and their roles and responsibilities. The level of detail provided in each PEP should be commensurate with the experience level of the source selection organization].

a. Step One: Proposal Evaluation.

- 1) Upon receipt of proposals the Contracting Officer will record and label proposals following the security procedures in Appendix (7).
- 2) Once proposals are recorded and labeled, the (PEAG Co-Chairs or Contracting Officer, as appropriate) shall meet with each evaluation team to accomplish the following:
 - (a) Distribute proposals.
 - (b) Provide target due dates for completing evaluations and submitting team reports.

- (c) Review evaluation procedures.
 - (d) Have evaluators sign the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure of Information Certifications (see attachment (1) to Appendix (7)).
 - (d) Review security procedures including the nondisclosure of source selection and proprietary information.
- 3) After proposals are distributed, the contracting officer, with the assistance of the evaluation teams, performs an initial review of proposals. This review identifies any proposal that is believed so grossly deficient as to be totally unacceptable on its face.
- 4) If, as a result of the initial review, proposals are to be eliminated from further consideration, the Contracting Officer shall, after consulting with legal counsel, notify the SEB.
- 5) Upon notifying the SEB, the Contracting Officer shall immediately notify those offerors whose proposals were found to be unacceptable.
- 6) The evaluation teams, under the direction and oversight of team chairpersons, conduct the detailed evaluation following the procedures in Appendices (3) and (4)
- 7) Upon completing proposal evaluation, each evaluation team shall submit its evaluation report to the PEAG Co-Chairpersons.
- 8) The PEAG Co-Chairpersons will review each report to ensure that the evaluation was conducted following these procedures and that the results of the evaluation are appropriately documented. If evaluation procedures were incorrectly followed or documentation is inadequate, the PEAG Co-Chairpersons will consult with the evaluation team to resolve discrepancies.
- 9) Using the results of the evaluation report, the PEAG Co-Chairpersons shall prepare an SEB report. The report shall include, at a minimum, the information listed in Appendix (5). A presentation of the evaluation shall be made to the SEB by the PEAG Co-Chairs and each evaluation team chairperson. The briefing should follow the SSA briefing format described below in subparagraph d.1).
- 10) The SEB shall review the SEB Report. Inconsistent or unsubstantiated data shall be returned to the PEAG Co-Chairpersons for correction.
- 11) Based upon the results of the initial evaluation, the SEB recommends either an award on initial offers or a competitive range determination. If award can be made on initial offers, the SEB shall proceed to **Step Three**, (paragraph c.4)) to prepare the final SEB report.
- 12) If award cannot be made on initial offers, the SEB shall provide a competitive range

recommendation to the Contracting Officer.

- 13) Based upon the recommendation of the SEB, the Contracting Officer shall make a competitive range determination following the guidance of FAR 15.306(c).

b. Step Two: Discussions.

- 1) The Contracting Officer shall promptly notify, in writing, all offerors eliminated from the competitive range.
- 2) The Contracting Officer shall conduct discussions with all offerors in the competitive range. At the request of the Contracting Officer, evaluation team members shall participate in discussions. Discussion items shall be addressed in writing.

In the event the Contracting Officer requests revised proposals, evaluation teams shall reconvene and evaluate proposals following the procedures above in Step One: Proposal Evaluation. (The purpose of this paragraph, if incorporated into the PEP, is to ensure evaluators understand the scope of their involvement in discussions.)

c. Step Three: Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs)

- 1) Once discussions are completed, the Contracting Officer shall request FPRs from all offerors in the competitive range.
- 2) Upon receipt of FPRs, the evaluation teams shall reconvene to evaluate final offers following the procedures in Appendix (3) and (4).
- 3) Evaluation team chairpersons submit final evaluation reports to the PEAG Co-Chairpersons. The PEAG Co-Chairpersons shall review the reports following the review procedures above in subparagraph E.1.a.8).
- 4) Using the results of the final evaluation reports, the PEAG Co-Chairperson, with the assistance of the evaluation team chairpersons, will draft the final SEB Report. The report shall include, at a minimum, the information listed in Appendix (6). Upon completing the report, the PEAG Co-Chairs and each evaluation team chairperson shall present the final evaluation results, in the form of a brief, to the SEB. The briefing should follow the SSA briefing format described below in subparagraph E.1.d., entitled, Briefing the SSA.
- 5) Prior to the briefing, the board recorder shall distribute the SEB report to the SEB members and the appropriate SEB advisors for review and comment. SEB members shall have at least three working days to review the draft report.
- 6) After the SEB reviews the draft report, the PEAG Co-Chairs shall make all required

changes and prepare the final report. Upon completing the final report and the SEB briefing, the PEAG Co-Chairs shall personally obtain the signatures of the SEB members on the final report.

- 7) The SEB Chairperson shall submit the final report to the SSA and schedule the SSA briefing

d. Briefing the SSA.

- 1) The (identify the individual or group responsible (e.g., PEAG Co-Chairs, Contracting Officer, evaluators, etc.)), on behalf of the SEB Chairperson, will prepare draft SSA briefing materials. Presentation material shall include (List the presentation material required for the SSA briefing. Examples of briefing materials include):
 - (a) An overview of the procurement, including the objective of the procurement.
 - (b) A chart/matrix listing the evaluation categories, factors, subfactors, and criteria.
 - (c) A matrix illustrating the evaluation results of each proposal.
 - (d) For each proposal, list the **significant** strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies and risks for each factor/criteria evaluated.
 - (e) (List any additional briefing material necessary for the procurement)
 - 2) The SEB Chairperson will review and approve SSA briefing materials. The PEAG Co-Chairs are responsible for making all necessary changes.
 - 3) If necessary, a dry run of the SSA briefing will be conducted in advance of the scheduled presentation.
 - 4) The SEB Chairperson shall brief the SSA. Members of the SEB shall attend the briefing. At the request of the SEB Chair, other members of the source selection organization shall also participate in the briefing.
2. **Evaluation Documentation.** Provide a table/list of the documentation required throughout the evaluation process. The table should identify the parties responsible for preparing the documentation. The chart on the following page provides examples of documentation typically required in the formal source selection process.

| Documentation | Responsibility * | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Prepare | Approve |
| | | |
| Step One: Proposal Evaluation | | |
| | | |
| Evaluation reports (Tech/Cost/Etc.) | Eval Team Chairperson | PEAG |
| SEB Report | PEAG | SEB Chairperson |
| Presentation of Report | Eval Teams PEAG | N/A |
| | | |
| Competitive Range Determination | KO | KO |
| | | |
| Step Two: Discussions | | |
| | | |
| Revised Evaluation Results | Eval Team Chairperson | PEAG |
| Revised SEB Report | PEAG | SEB Chairperson |
| | | |
| Step Three: FPRs | | |
| Final Evaluation of Proposals | Eval Team Chairperson | PEAG |
| Final SEB Report | PEAG | SEB |
| SSA Briefing | Eval Teams PEAG | SEB |

*** Note: At the discretion of the approving official, documentation may require revision subsequent to approval.**

APPENDIX ONE: SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION

The Source Selection Organization will consist of the Source Selection Authority (SSA), the Competitive Acquisition Management Panel (CAMP), the Source Evaluation Board (SEB), and the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group (PEAG). (INSERT NAME) is the Contracting Officer.

- A. Source Selection Authority.
- B. Competitive Acquisition Management Panel
- C. Source Evaluation Board.
 - Chairperson
 - Members
 - Advisors
 - Recorder/Security Officer
- D. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS GROUP
(Contracting Officer/Specialist),
 - Co-Chairperson
 - Co-Chairperson
- E. TECHNICAL EVALUATION TEAM
 - Team Leader/Evaluator
 - Evaluator
 - Evaluator
 - Evaluator
- F. OTHER EVALUATION TEAMS (As applicable)
 - Team Leader/Evaluator
 - Evaluator
 - Evaluator
 - Evaluator
- G. COST/PRICE EVALUATION TEAM
 - Team Leader/Evaluator
 - Evaluator
 - Evaluator
 - Technical Advisor/Evaluator
- H. CONSULTANTS (As applicable)

Enclosure (7) to SOP XX
Appendix (2)

APPENDIX TWO: SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

| <u>EVENT</u> | <u>EVENT DURATION</u> | <u>SCHEDULE DATES</u> | <u>DAY (T+)/ DURATION</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|

Enclosure (7) to SOP XX
Appendix (2)

APPENDIX THREE: TECHNICAL EVALUATION TEAM INSTRUCTIONS

- A. General.** Each evaluator on the Technical Evaluation Team (TET) must be familiar with the Request for Proposal (RFP), the Selection Plan (SP), and these procedures. The PEAG Chairperson(s) will provide these materials to evaluators prior to the receipt of proposals.
- B. Administration.**
1. **Administrative Support.** Specify the services each office shall provide (e.g., clerical support, graphics support, reproduction services, space allocations, etc.) throughout the evaluation process (i.e., from receipt of proposals through SSA briefing).
 2. **Physical Resources.** Identify where proposals will be evaluated and stored.
 3. **Working Hours.** Identify the working hours for the evaluation team.
 4. **Leave.** If appropriate, state how evaluators are to arrange for annual leave.
 5. **Telephone Calls.** If appropriate, establish a policy regarding incoming and outgoing telephone calls.
- C. Rules of Conduct.** Appendix (7) is the Security Plan, for this evaluation. Each evaluator must read and comply with the procedures in Appendix (7).
- D. TET Work Priority.** The evaluation of the proposals received in response to the RFP takes priority over any other work assignment. Evaluators shall report any perceived or apparent conflicts with this assignment to the evaluation team chairperson. The evaluation team chairperson shall report this conflict to the SEB Chairperson. The reporting of a conflict is confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone (including supervisors) who does not have a need to know.
- E. Consultants.** If the SP approved the use of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or consultants, this paragraph will establish the guidelines the evaluation team must follow to obtain the assistance of such individuals and/or groups.
- F. Definitions.** For evaluation purposes the following definitions apply:
1. **Clarification.** Limited exchanges between the Government and offerors that may occur when award without discussions is contemplated.
 2. **Strength.** An element of the proposal which exceeds a requirement of the solicitation in a beneficial way to the Government.

3. **Weakness.** A flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.
4. **Significant Weakness.** A flaw in the proposal that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.
5. **Deficiency.** A material failure of the proposal to meet a requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses that increase the risk of unsuccessful performance to an unacceptable level.
6. **Risk.** The evaluator's confidence in an offeror's ability to successfully perform the technical effort described in its proposal.

G. Ratings.

1. **Proposal merit** shall be rated as follows:
 - a. **Superior.** Exceeds the requirements in a way which yields significant benefits to the Government; weaknesses, if any, are of small impact and NO significant weaknesses or deficiencies. (Color Code: Blue)
 - b. **Satisfactory.** Meets all requirements; proposal offers no significant benefits beyond the stated requirements, yet NO significant weaknesses or deficiencies exist. (Color Code: Green)
 - c. **Marginal.** Fails to meet the minimum requirements or has one or more significant weaknesses. Deficiencies and significant weaknesses are correctable without major revisions to the proposals. (Color Code: Yellow)
 - d. **Unsatisfactory.** Fails to meet the requirement; one or more deficiencies for which correction would require a major revision or redirection of the proposal. (Color Code: Red)
2. **Past performance** shall be rated as follows:
 - a. **No rating.** The offeror has no relevant past performance (Color Code: White).
 - b. **Superior.** One or more examples where past performance significantly exceeded requirements (Color Code: Blue).
 - c. **Satisfactory.** Past performance met requirements (Color Code: Green).
 - d. **Marginal.** One or more examples where past performance failed to meet requirements due

to fault of contractor. (Color Code: Yellow)

- e. **Unsatisfactory.** One or more examples where past performance significantly failed to meet requirements due to fault of contractor (Color Code: Red).

H. Risk Rating. The following definitions will be used when evaluating proposal risk:

1. **High (H).** The proposed approach is likely to cause significant disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance even with special contractor emphasis and close government monitoring.
2. **Moderate (M).** The proposed approach can potentially cause some disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance. However, special contractor emphasis and close government monitoring will probably be able to overcome difficulties; and
3. **Low (L).** The proposed approach has little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance. Normal contractor effort and normal government monitoring will probably be able to overcome difficulties.

I. Initial Proposal Review. Within (XX) days after receipt of proposals, the PEAG Chairpersons and the TET will conduct an initial review of each technical proposal. This review is to identify any proposal which is believed so grossly deficient as to be technically unacceptable on its face. Evaluators shall scan each proposal to insure it contains the elements required by Section L of the RFP. The TET may apportion the proposals among members to expedite this review. An Initial Review Report (similar to attachment (1)) is completed for each proposal and forwarded by the TET Chairperson to the PEAG Co-Chairpersons.

J. Evaluation Guidelines. Following the initial review of proposals, evaluators shall independently evaluate and rate each proposal. Below are general guidelines evaluators shall follow throughout the evaluation.

1. If you haven't already done so, read the solicitation and these procedures thoroughly and carefully. Ensure you fully understand the Government's requirements, including the work statement or specification, proposal content requirements (Section L of the RFP), and evaluation criteria (Section M of the RFP).
2. Evaluate proposals strictly in accordance with these procedures. **Do not add, subtract, or change evaluation factors, standards, or criteria.**
3. Evaluate each proposal on its own merit. **Do not compare proposals.** Proposals shall be evaluated against the evaluation standards in the worksheets.

4. Evaluate only what is in the proposal. Do not interpret what is said in the proposal. Do not assume that the offeror will do, or not do, something if it is not actually stated. Do not use personal knowledge or judgment as a substitute for what is written. Nevertheless, an evaluator must rely on his/her technical knowledge and expertise to make an objective evaluation.
5. Do not write on the proposals. Notes should be written on the evaluation worksheets or other paper.
6. Before evaluating, familiarize yourself with each proposal. Understand how each proposal is organized and structured to facilitate the evaluation.

K. Independent Proposal Evaluation. Proposal evaluation is an assessment of how well an offeror's proposal meets the solicitation requirements and an assessment of the risks associated with the offeror's proposed approach. These assessments are made by evaluating a proposal solely on those factors, subfactors, and assessment criteria specified in Section M of the solicitation and the standards in this PEP. The following paragraphs describe the component tasks of the evaluation.

1. **Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Significant Weaknesses, or Deficiencies.** Using the evaluation worksheets (see Attachments (2) and (3) for sample worksheets), each evaluator shall evaluate a proposal's response to each factor, subfactor, and assessment criteria listed in the RFP. As each evaluator reads an offeror's proposal, he/she will identify its strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies. Strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, or deficiencies are defined above in paragraph F., entitled Definitions. An assessment of a proposal's strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies is one of the most critical elements in the evaluation and selection process. In order to make a sound selection decision, the Source Selection Authority needs to understand the ways in which a given proposal is considered technically strong, as well as the ways in which it is weak or deficient. Hence, a catalog of the significant strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies (in terms of the evaluation factors) facilitates the process of arriving at a well informed judgment as to which proposal is, overall, most advantageous to the Government.
2. **Documenting Strengths, Weaknesses, Significant Weaknesses, or Deficiencies.** When documenting a strength, weakness, significant weakness, or deficiency, always identify (by page number and paragraph) where the solicitation states the requirement and where the proposal addresses the requirement. This task is important since evaluators may have to refer to their worksheets weeks or months after completing the evaluation.
 - a. Strengths. Because an offeror has offered more than the solicitation requires, does not necessarily mean the Government will benefit from such a promise. Hence, when identifying a strength, evaluators must also state the benefit expected from adopting the proposed approach.

- b. Weaknesses and Significant Weaknesses. When identifying a weakness, evaluators must also comment on the significance of the weakness and the expected impact such an approach would have on contract performance if accepted as proposed.
 - c. Deficiencies. The documentation of a deficiency requires special attention. When listing a deficiency, always identify:
 - (1) Why that aspect of the proposal is deficient;
 - (2) The impact of accepting the proposal as written;
 - (3) If the deficiency can be corrected, and
 - (4) State, if feasible, if a correction would entail so substantial of a revision to the proposal as to require the submission of a new proposal.
 - d. Ambiguities. Occasionally, language in a proposal is ambiguous, and the proposal's technical merit will differ depending on which of the possible meanings is chosen by the evaluator. In other instances, proposal language is simply unclear, and the evaluator cannot understand it well enough to rate it without guessing at its meaning. Last, a proposal may sometimes describe, in general terms, a particular approach but will not provide enough detailed information to permit an evaluation of its feasibility and merit. When any of these situations occur, evaluators must decide whether or not the proposal, as presented, meets the solicitation requirements. It is extremely important that evaluators recognize that their job is to evaluate what is written, and not what can be interpreted or construed. **Therefore, the proposal has correctable deficiencies to the extent that it fails to demonstrate that it meets the RFP requirements, is vague or ambiguous or contains unsubstantiated approaches.**
 - e. Exchanges Before Establishment of the Competitive Range. Evaluators must also identify those aspects of the proposal which require exchanges before establishment of the competitive range. Exchanges before establishment of the competitive range may take the form of "clarifications" or of "communications before establishment of the competitive range." "Clarification" is defined above in paragraph F., entitled, Definitions. "Communication before establishment of the competitive range" are exchanges after receipt of proposals, leading to the establishment of the competitive range. "Communication before establishment of the competitive range" must be held with offerors whose past performance information is the determining factor preventing them from being placed in the competitive range. When a proposal requires a clarification, or a communication before establishment of the competitive range evaluators shall complete Attachment (4).
3. **Identifying Risks.** A risk assessment is the identification and evaluation of the risks associated

with an offeror's proposed approach as it relates to accomplishing the requirements of the solicitation. When evaluating for risks, it is important that evaluators recognize and distinguish between risks inherent to acquisition objectives and those associated with a proposed approach. When risks are inherent in an acquisition, evaluators must not penalize offerors merely because of the existence of such risks in their proposals. Rather the evaluation must focus on the acceptability of the proposed solution to manage such risks. Therefore, in evaluating proposal risks, evaluators must consider the procurement or program risks (if any) identified in the AP, the offeror's assessment of such risks (if requested by the RFP), and then make an independent judgment of the probability of success, the impact of failure, and the alternatives available to meet contract requirements as well as risks which are a result of the solution proposed by the offeror.

4. **Documenting the Risk Assessment.** Proposal risk assessments are discussed in the evaluation narratives along with the strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies for each factor, subfactor or element other than cost (price) as specified in Section M of the RFP. As with documenting strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies, risk assessments must be fully justified.
5. **Rating Proposals.** Once each subfactor/factor is evaluated for its merits and risks, evaluators shall then rate each subfactor/factor as follows:
 - a. **Rating Technical Merit.** After assessing the merits of the technical proposal (i.e., identification of strengths, weaknesses, or deficiencies), evaluators shall rate each factor using the definitions above in paragraph G., entitled, Ratings. Before rating a proposal, evaluators must carefully review their narrative and based on the content of the narrative assign a rating. **Each rating must be supported by the narrative.** Ratings and their corresponding color codes shall be recorded on the evaluation worksheets. **Factor color codes shall not be rolled-up to develop one overall color code for the associated category.**
 - b. **Rating Proposal Risk.** Similar to rating the proposal's technical merits, evaluators shall also rate proposal risk. Before applying a rating evaluators must review their narrative and based upon the content of the narrative, assign a risk rating using the definitions above in Paragraph H., entitled, Risk Rating. However, the risk assessment and rating assigned to a particular factor or sub factor are independent of each other. Any risk assessment rating may be used with any rating to reflect evaluation results. Hence, a superior proposal may have a high degree of risk associated with it while a satisfactory or marginal proposal may be assessed with a low degree of risk.
- L. **Evaluation of a Live Test Demonstration.** If a Live Test Demonstration (LTD) is conducted, the TEP must establish procedures for evaluating demonstrations. Areas to consider for LTDs are:
 1. When should a demonstration occur (e.g., before or after the competitive range, FPRs, etc.).
 2. What evaluation sheets should be used to evaluate demonstrations.

3. Procedures for evaluating demonstrations.
4. Procedures for a consensus meeting.
5. Procedures for preparing an evaluation report.

M. Consensus Meeting. After proposals have been independently reviewed, evaluated and rated, evaluation team members shall meet and form a team rating for each proposal. Consistent with the independent ratings, the team rating is based on a consensus of each proposal's merits and risks. Hence, consensus ratings must be fully supported by a narrative of a proposal's strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks. During the consensus meeting, evaluators will discuss each proposal's strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks and the evaluator's rationale for identifying them as such. For each evaluation subfactor, factor, and criteria the TET will form a consensus regarding a proposal's merits (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies) and risks and assign both a technical and risk rating (see above paragraphs F., G., and H.). The team's evaluation and rating of each proposal shall be documented on the attached worksheets (see Attachments (5) and (6) for sample formats). Since all proposals were evaluated against the same evaluation standards, the SEB expects to see a "clustered finding" among evaluators. Significant differences in evaluator's assessment of merits or ratings must be addressed during the consensus meeting.

1. **Dissenting Opinions.** If a consensus cannot be reached by the team, a dissenting report shall be prepared by the individual(s) in disagreement. Dissenting opinions shall be documented (see Attachment (7) for sample worksheet) and shall accompany the majority opinion in the evaluation report.
2. **Evaluation Reports.** Based upon this consensus, the TET Chairperson shall prepare a report of the team's findings. Individual evaluation worksheets, the team's evaluation worksheets, and minority reports, if any, shall accompany the report. All members of the TET must sign the report. The TET Chairperson shall submit the report to the PEAG Co-Chairpersons for a preliminary review and approval.

N. SEB Presentation. Upon completing the evaluation, the TET Chairperson shall brief the SEB on the results of the evaluation. The brief should follow the SSA briefing format discussed in the PEP, paragraph E.l.d., entitled, Briefing the SSA.

O. Discussions. (If discussions are held, this section must describe the TET's expected roles and responsibilities during discussions. For example, will the TET participate in discussions or evaluate responses to discussion issues? This information is important since the TET may believe their task is complete with the evaluation of proposals.)

P. Evaluation of Final Revised Proposals (FPRs). If, after the receipt of FPRs, offerors have

made changes to their technical proposals, TET members shall independently evaluate and rate these changes following the proposal evaluation procedures in paragraphs K., entitled, Independent Proposal Evaluation. Upon completing the independent evaluations/ratings, the TET shall meet to formulate its group evaluation and ratings following the procedures above in paragraph M., entitled, Consensus Meeting. The TET Chairperson shall submit the team's final report to the PEAG Chairperson(s) for a preliminary review and approval.

- Q. SEB Briefing.** The TET Chairperson shall brief the SEB on the final results of the evaluation. The brief shall follow the SSA briefing format discussed in the PEP, paragraph E.l.d., entitled, Briefing the SSA.
- R. SSA Briefing.** The evaluation team shall prepare briefing materials for the SSA brief. The TET Chairperson shall, if requested by the SEB Chairperson, present the teams' findings to the SSA.

Attachment (1)

INITIAL REVIEW REPORT

Offeror

RFP Reference:

Date:

1. Comment(s):

2. Consequence of Omission:

2. Recommendation:

Action By Contracting Officer:

Contracting Officer

Date:

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24
Appendix (3)

Attachment (2)

EVALUATOR SUBFACTOR WORKSHEET

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Offeror | 2. Evaluator |
| 3. Date | 4. Area |
| 5. Factor | 6. Subfactor |
| 7. Criteria | 8. RFP Reference |
| 9. Standard | |
11. Narrative (Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Significant Weaknesses, and Deficiencies)
- A. Strength. (An element of the proposal which exceeds a requirement of the solicitation in a beneficial way to the Government.)
 - B. Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.
 - C. Significant Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.)
 - D. Deficiency: (A material failure of the proposal to meet a requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses that increase the risk of unsuccessful performance to an unacceptable level.)
 - E. Risks
13. Risk Assessment NONE LOW MODERATE HIGH

Attachment (3)

EVALUATOR FACTOR WORKSHEET

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Offeror | 2. Evaluator |
| 3. Date | 4. Area |
| 5. Factor | 6. Criteria |

7. RFP Reference

8. Standard

9. Narrative (Identity Strengths, Weaknesses and Deficiencies)

A. Strength. (An element of the proposal which exceeds a requirement of the solicitation in beneficial way to the Government.)

B. Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.)

C. Significant Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.)

D. Deficiency: (A material failure of the proposal to meet a requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses that increase the risk of unsuccessful performance to an unacceptable level.)

E. Risks

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 10. Rating/Color Code | SUPERIOR (BLUE) | SAT. (GREEN) | MARGINAL (YELLOW) | UNSAT. (RED) |
| 11. Risk Assessment | NONE | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH |

Attachment (4)

**COMMUNICATION BEFORE ESTABLISHING
THE COMPETITIVE RANGE**

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Offeror | 2. Evaluator |
| 3. Date | 4. Area |
| 5. Factor | 6. Subfactor |
| 7. Criteria | 8. RFP Reference |
| 9. Nature of Communication | |
| 10. Summary of Effect of Communication | |

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24
Appendix (3)

Attachment (5)

TEAM CONSENSUS SUBFACTOR RATING WORKSHEET

1. Offeror
2. Date
3. Area
4. Factor
5. Subfactor
6. Criteria
7. RFP Reference
8. Standard
9. Narrative (Identify Strengths, Weaknesses and Deficiencies)
 - A. Strength: (An element of the proposal which exceeds a requirement of the solicitation in a beneficial way to the Government.)
 - B. Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.)
 - C. Significant Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance).
 - D. Deficiency: (A material failure of the proposal to meet a requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses that increase the risk of unsuccessful performance to an unacceptable level.)
 - E. Risks
10. Risk Assessment NONE LOW MODERATE HIGH

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24
Appendix (3)

Attachment (6)

TEAM CONSENSUS FACTOR RATING WORKSHEET

1. Offeror
2. Date
3. Area
4. Factor
5. Criteria
6. RFP Reference
7. Standard
8. Narrative (Identify Strengths, Weaknesses and Deficiencies)
 - A. Strength: (An element of the proposal which exceeds a requirement of the solicitation in a beneficial way to the Government.)
 - B. Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.)
 - C. Significant Weakness: (A flaw in the proposal that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance).
 - D. Deficiency: (A material failure of the proposal to meet a requirement or a combination of significant weaknesses that increase the risk of unsuccessful performance to an unacceptable level.)
 - E. Risks
9. Rating/Color Code

| | | | |
|----------|---------|----------|--------|
| SUPERIOR | SAT. | MARGINAL | UNSAT. |
| (BLUE) | (GREEN) | (YELLOW) | (RED) |
10. Risk Assessment

| | | | |
|------|-----|----------|------|
| NONE | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH |
|------|-----|----------|------|

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24
Appendix (3)

Attachment (7)

DISSENTING OPINION

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Offeror | 2. Evaluator |
| 3. Date | 4. Area |
| 5. Factor | 6. Subtactor |
| 7. Criteria | 8. RFP Reference |
| 9. Problem Narrative | |
| 10. Risk | |
| 11. Remarks | |

APPENDIX FOUR: COST/PRICE EVALUATION TEAM INSTRUCTIONS

A. General.

1. **Purpose.** State the purpose of this evaluation.
2. **Timing.** State when this evaluation will occur (e.g., concurrent with the technical evaluation, after the technical evaluation is completed, etc.).
3. **References.** Identify the materials with which evaluators must be familiar (e.g., Independent Government Estimate (IGE), Government or industry standards, the RFP and subsequent amendments, the selection plan, these procedures etc.). State when evaluators will receive this information and who will provide it.

B. Administration.

1. **Administrative Support Services.** Specify the services (e.g., clerical support, graphics support, reproduction services, space allocation, etc.) each office (e.g., contracts, project, sponsor, requiring office) shall provide throughout the evaluation process.
2. **Physical Resources.** Identify where proposals will be evaluated and stored.
3. **Working Hours.** Identify the working hours of the team.
4. **Leave.** If appropriate, establish a policy regarding leave (e.g., is annual leave allowed during evaluations, who should evaluators call for sick leave or emergency leave?).
5. **Incoming Telephone Calls.** If appropriate, establish a policy regarding incoming and outgoing telephone calls.

- C. Rules of Conduct.** Appendix (7), Security Plan, contains the rules of conduct for this evaluation. Each evaluator is personally responsible for reading and complying with Appendix (7).

- D. Priority.** The evaluation of proposals for this solicitation takes priority over any other work assignment. Evaluators shall report any perceived or apparent conflicts with this assignment to the team chairperson. The evaluation chairperson shall report this conflict to the SEB chairperson. The reporting of a conflict is confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone (including a supervisor) who does not have a need to know.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- E. Evaluation Criteria.** Per provision M ____ of RFP _____ cost/price proposals shall be evaluated to determine (insert the cost/price evaluation criteria from section M of the RFP).
- F. Initial Proposal Review.** Upon receipt of proposals, the cost/price evaluation team (C/PET) shall review each proposal to ensure the information required by Section L of the solicitation has been provided. If information is missing, the C/PET Chairperson shall prepare a memo detailing the omissions and provide it to the PEAG Chairperson(s).
- G. Proposal Evaluation.** Following the initial review, (price/cost) proposals shall be evaluated as follows:

Choice 1: Use when price proposals are solicited.

1. **Evaluating Proposals.** (Note: The evaluation of price proposals will vary significantly based upon the proposed contract type, its pricing structure, and the complexity of the procurement. As with technical proposals the Government must evaluate what it stated would be evaluated in the solicitation (i.e., section M). Hence, the first step in developing evaluation procedures is to refer to Sections L and M of the draft RFP, determine what pricing information will be requested, what will be evaluated and from there determine how these areas will be evaluated. Listed below are evaluation procedures for areas of a price proposal typically evaluated in a competitive procurement. The procedures, except where noted, are provided as guidance and must be tailored to suit the needs of the procurement.) Pursuant to Section M of the RFP, price proposals shall be evaluated for fairness and reasonableness, congruence between the price and technical proposals, and the offeror's understanding of the requirement.
 - a. Evaluation for Price Reasonableness. Per FAR 15.404-1(a), the evaluation team shall make a proposal analysis to ensure that the final agreed to price is fair and reasonable. FAR 15.404-1(b)(2) lists various techniques that may be used for this analysis.
 - b. Congruence between the price and technical proposals. Proposals shall be evaluated to ensure congruence between the price and technical proposals. This evaluation assesses the degree to which the price proposal accurately reflects the approaches and resources offered in the technical and management approach. The purpose of this evaluation is to uncover any inconsistencies between the technical proposal and the price proposal and to determine an offeror's understanding of the requirement and the ability to perform the contract. If inconsistencies are revealed, the Government must determine if they are the result of an offeror's pricing/marketing strategy (e.g., buying in) or indicative of an offeror's misunderstanding of the requirement. Congruency shall be evaluated as follows: (List the areas evaluators will analyze for congruency. Areas to evaluate may include those listed below.)

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

(1) Direct Labor (Typically used in indefinite delivery service contracts).

Is the labor mix in the price proposal consistent with the technical proposal?

Are the hours in the price proposal consistent with those in the technical proposal?

Is uncompensated overtime proposed?

Do the proposed labor rates accurately reflect the caliber of the proposed personnel?

(2) Direct Material.

Are the materials proposed in the technical proposal reflected in the price proposal?

Does the price proposal reflect the quality, quantity and type proposed?

(3) Proposed Resources.

Are the resources (management, facilities, special equipment, etc.) offered in the technical proposal reflected in the price proposal? Evaluators should consider both the quantity as well as the quality.

Does the price proposal reflect other direct costs (e.g., travel, material, computer time, etc.) required to support the proposed technical approach?

c. Understanding of the requirement. Price proposals shall be evaluated to ensure that the offeror understands the Government's requirement.

2. **Documentation.** Upon completing the price analysis, the C/PET shall report its findings to the PEAG Chairperson(s). At a minimum the pricing report must include (List the contents of the pricing report. Below are examples of the information a report may contain):

a. The total price proposed by each offeror.

b. The total evaluated price of each offeror.

c. A description of how the total evaluated price was calculated.

d. An explanation of the difference (i.e., upward or downward adjustments) between the proposed price and the evaluated price.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- e. A discussion of any concerns regarding an offeror's understanding of the work or ability to perform the work based upon the analysis performed.
 - f. A comparison (in tabular format) of all offerors' proposed prices.
 - g. An explanation (if possible) of wide variations among offerors' price proposals (e.g., location of facilities, innovative technical approaches, advanced technology, inefficient processes, etc.)
 - h. A comparison of proposed prices to the Government estimate, and an explanation of gross deviations.
 - i. A statement regarding the adequacy of price competition.
 - k. Specific issues to be discussed with offerors concerning their price proposals. (Note: If there are a large number of offerors, the SEB may require this after the competitive range is determined.)
3. **SEB Presentation.** The C/PET Chairperson shall present the team's evaluation findings to the SEB in the form of a brief. The brief should follow the same format as the SSA briefing.

Choice 2: Use when Cost Proposals are Solicited.

1. **Cost Evaluation Procedures.** (Note: The evaluation of cost proposals will vary significantly based upon the proposed contract type, its cost/pricing structure, and the complexity of the procurement. As with technical proposals the Government must evaluate what it stated would be evaluated in the solicitation (i.e., Section M). Hence, the first step in developing evaluation procedures is to refer to Sections L and M of the RFP, determine what cost information will be requested, what will be evaluated and from there determine how these areas will be evaluated. Listed below are evaluation procedures for areas of a cost proposal typically evaluated in a competitive procurement. The procedures are provided as guidance and must be tailored to suit the needs of the procurement.) Pursuant to Section M of the RFP, cost proposals shall be evaluated for reasonableness and realism.
- a. Cost Realism. Evaluators shall perform a cost realism analysis to determine the probable cost of performance. A cost realism analysis involves a summary level review of the cost portion of the offeror's proposals to determine if the overall costs proposed are realistic for the work to be performed. In performing a cost realism analysis, evaluators shall examine the following elements (List the factors evaluators will examine. Below are examples of cost elements that may be evaluated when performing a cost realism analysis. Each C/PET must carefully consider what elements are relevant to the instant procurement.):

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- 1) Direct Labor. Do the direct labor costs indicate appropriate labor hours and appropriate labor mix? Do proposed labor hours reflect a complete understanding of the requirement? Are the proposed labor hours consistent with the offeror's proposed approach and the RFP requirements? Are the labor rates consistent with the proposed labor categories?
 - 2) Direct Material. Do the material costs indicate that the quantity, quality, and type of material to be used are consistent with the offeror's proposed technical approach and appropriate to the RFP requirements?
 - 3) Other Proposed Resources. Are proposed resources (e.g., management, facilities, computers, special equipment, etc.,) reflected in the cost proposal? Are such resources consistent with the objectives of the RFP requirements.
 - 4) Other Direct Costs. Are other costs (travel, per diem, rentals, etc.,) realistic with respect to the Government's requirements and with the offeror's proposed technical approach to meet these requirements?
 - 5) Indirect Costs. Are the indirect costs (software engineering overhead, general and administrative expenses, etc.,) realistic with respect to the RFP requirements and the offeror's proposed technical approach to meet these requirements?
 - 6) Overall Costs. Do the overall cost figures support the kind of contractor effort required by the RFP and promised in the offeror's technical and management proposals?
- b. Price Analysis. The evaluation team should also perform a price analysis to assist the contracting officer in making his/her price reasonableness determination. (See Choice 1 above for guidance.)
2. **Documentation**. Upon completing the cost realism and price analysis, the C/PET shall report its findings to the (PEAG chairperson(s) or contracting officer, as appropriate). At a minimum the report must contain (List the contents of the evaluation report. Examples of information are listed below.):
- a. The total cost and fee proposed by each offeror.
 - b. The total evaluated cost of each offeror.
 - c. A description of how the total evaluated cost was calculated.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- d. An explanation of the differences (i.e., upward or downward adjustments) between the proposed cost and the Government evaluated cost.
 - e. A discussion of any concerns regarding an offeror's understanding of the work or ability to perform the work based upon the analysis performed.
 - f. A comparison (in tabular format) of all offeror's proposed costs.
 - g. An explanation (if possible) of wide variations among offerors' cost proposals (e.g., location of facilities, innovative technical approaches, advanced technology, inefficient processes, etc.,
 - h. A comparison of proposed costs to the Government estimate, and an explanation of gross deviations.
 - i. A statement regarding the adequacy of price competition.
 - j. Specific issues to be discussed with offerors concerning their proposals. (Note: If there are a large number of offerors, the SEB may require this after the competitive range is established.)
3. **SEB Presentation.** The C/PET Chairperson shall present the team's evaluation findings to the SEB in the form of a brief. The brief should follow the same format as the SSA briefing.
- G. Exchanges.** Identify the roles and responsibilities of the cost/price evaluation team during exchanges. For example, will the team be expected to participate in discussions or evaluate responses to discussion issues.
- H. Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs).** Upon the receipt of FPRs, the C/PET shall reconvene and evaluate final (price/cost) proposals. Evaluators shall follow the same procedures used in the initial evaluation. The C/PET Chairperson shall prepare the final report following the format used in the initial evaluation and shall submit the report to the PEAG Chairperson(s).
- I. Presentation to the SEB.** The C/PET Chairperson, if requested by the PEAG Chairperson(s), shall present the results of the team's evaluation to the SEB.
- J. SSA Briefing.** The C/PET shall prepare the briefing materials for the cost/price portion of the SSA brief. The C/PET Chairperson shall, if requested by the SEB Chairperson, present the team's findings to the SSA.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

APPENDIX FIVE: CONTENTS OF COMPETITIVE RANGE REPORT

- A. The report from the Proposal Evaluation and Analysis Group to the Source Evaluation Board following the initial evaluations of proposals shall, at a minimum, contain the following:
1. **The requirement.** Provide a brief narrative description of the item(s) or service(s) being acquired.
 2. **Overview of the procurement.** This is an Executive Summary and addresses such items as:
 - a. Funds (type and amount);
 - b. Type and number of contracts to be awarded;
 - c. Significant milestones;
 - d. Period of performance;
 - e. Number of solicitations issued, number of proposals and code names, and any proposals eliminated as grossly deficient; and
 - f. Evaluation criteria;
 3. **Evaluation findings.** This shall indicate the results of the evaluations and any further analysis prior to Exchanges after Competitive Range. It is intended to assist the Contracting Officer in establishing the Competitive Range. It should:
 - a. Include a comparison of the evaluation criteria and the offerors' ratings;
 - b. Compare the offerors' proposed costs or prices and include a general discussion of the PEAG's analysis of the realism and adequacy of the cost proposals; and
 - c. Summarize what the PEAG considers significant discriminators among proposals. List the strengths and weaknesses (including deficiencies and risks) in each offeror's proposal. List items for discussion with each offeror.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

APPENDIX SIX: CONTENTS OF SEB REPORT TO THE SSA

A. The report from the Source Evaluation Board to the Source Selection Official shall, at a minimum, contain the following:

1. **Executive Summary.** The Executive Summary shall include:
 - a. The nature of the supplies and/or services to be procured;
 - b. Background information including a brief chronology of the procurement;
 - c. An overview of the evaluation criteria;
 - d. A summary of the findings and ratings of the offerors; and
 - e. Any items of special interest.
2. **Introduction** which includes (if not already covered in the Executive Summary):
 - a. The authority for the source selection action;
 - b. Data pertaining to the Selection Plan, such as the date of its approval;
 - c. The basis for award and the evaluation criteria;
 - d. The composition of the SEB by organization and specialty;
 - e. Discussion of the requirements of the solicitation; and
 - f. Identification (by code name) of the offeror's who responded and those in the competitive range.
3. **Description of proposals.** Provide a brief description of each offer within the competitive range. No judgements or comparisons of the quality, or rating of the proposals is presented here.
4. **Analysis of proposals.** Provide a analysis (by evaluation criteria other than cost) of the proposals in the competitive range by identifying strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies and risks. The major strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies and risks should be included for each proposal.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

The analysis will include a summary of the evaluation of:

- a. Technical and management approach;
 - b. Schedule and risk considerations as assessed against the technical approach;
 - c. Production aspects relating to make-or-buy decisions, anticipated new manufacturing technologies, availability of production facilities and overall production competence; and
 - d. Design tradeoffs proposed and their potential impact on the project.
5. **Cost.** The reasonableness, realism and completeness of each offeror's cost proposal should be fully explained. Address, as applicable, cost or price analysis, the independent Government estimate, most probable cost, total cost to the Government, life cycle cost, and the impact of technical uncertainty. This analysis should also address the cost risks associated with each proposal.
 6. **Overall assessment of past performance.** Provide an integrated analysis of each offeror's relevant past performance history, unless provided in the technical and management analysis.
 7. **Contractual considerations.** Discuss significant contractual arrangements with each offeror and any significant differences between the offerors. List any exceptions to the Government's requirements taken by any offeror.
 8. **SEB Findings.** Provide a comparative analysis, expressed in brief statements, of the issues the SEB considers to be significant to the decision. If requested by the SSA, provide a recommendation for selection.
 9. **Signature page.** Provide a final page bearing the signature of the SEB Chairperson and SEB members.

APPENDIX SEVEN: SECURITY PLAN

A. Purpose. This plan outlines the security policies and procedures SEB members, advisors, and evaluation team members must follow during the evaluation and selection process of this procurement. For brevity, SEB members, evaluators, and advisors are referred to as board members, unless procedures apply to a specific group.

B. Policy. SEB and evaluation proceedings shall not be disclosed to any unauthorized Government or non-government personnel.

1. **Why should there be a Security Plan when no classified information is involved?** SEB security is necessary to maintain the integrity of the federal acquisition process. It also preserves and protects the competitive process. Its purpose is to prevent the untimely or unauthorized disclosure of the SEB's rationale and findings and to minimize the potential for undue pressure on individual members. SEB deliberations and the methods used to evaluate proposals is of interest to competing offerors, the industry and the press. To preclude the possibility of any outside attempt to influence the course of the evaluation or obtain sensitive SEB information, both SEB discussions and resulting documents must be safeguarded. Leaks of sensitive SEB information can result in protests which can cause extensive delays in awarding a procurement involving perhaps years of effort and millions of dollars.
2. **What is sensitive SEB information?** Sensitive SEB information includes all of the following:
 - a. Government Cost Estimate prior to the determination of the Competitive Range.
 - b. The RFP, including the evaluation factors and subfactors, prior to its release.
 - c. Offeror's proposals.
 - d. Minutes of SEB meetings.
 - e. Source Selection Information. For the purpose of satisfying the provisions of the Procurement Integrity Act, "Source Selection Information" is:
 - 1) The Selection Plan;
 - 2) Proposal Evaluation Procedures;

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- 3) Technical and cost/price evaluations of proposals, including working papers, reports, and presentation materials;
 - 4) Competitive range determinations which identify proposals, or competitors;
 - 5) Other information the Contracting Officer considers source selection information. See FAR 3.104-3.
- f. Other material identified as sensitive material by the contracting officer.
3. **Procurement Integrity.** In addition to the restrictions placed upon board members by this security plan, the Procurement Integrity Provisions contained in Section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act, as amended (hereafter referred to as the Act), prohibits additional activities. Only those provisions of the Act that impact evaluation proceedings have been incorporated into this plan. Board members are personally responsible for understanding and complying with the Act. Individuals seeking additional information on the Act should contact the Contracting Officer.
4. **The SEB Security Program.** The security procedures are identified and grouped into the following three categories:
- a. Physical Security.
 - b. Personnel Security.
 - c. Document Security.

C. Physical Security.

1. **Location.** Proposals shall be evaluated only in the areas stipulated in the evaluation plans. (NOTE: To the maximum extent possible, each evaluation team should be provided a dedicated source evaluation room. If this is not possible, this section must address how and where evaluators will secure proposals.)
2. **Access.** (Access to evaluation rooms and issuance of keys to these areas and storage cabinets is a matter for each SEB to determine based on the security needs of the particular acquisition. At a minimum this plan must discuss):
 - a. Access to evaluation rooms. Identify (by title) individuals authorized access to evaluation rooms. State how such individuals will gain access.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- b. Who is authorized to have keys to evaluation rooms. Identify (by title) individuals authorized to have keys and identify the individual accountable for issuing and tracking keys.
- c. Security Violations. Any board member shall immediately notify the SEB Chairperson when any of the following conditions is known or suspected to exist (these conditions must be tailored to meet the security needs of each procurement):
 - 1) Keys to work areas have been lost, stolen, misplaced, or duplicated;
 - 2) Locking devices are malfunctioning or unsafe;
 - 3) Keys to work areas or storage cabinets held by unauthorized people;
 - 4) Unlocked work areas or storage cabinets left unattended;
 - 5) Access to work areas or storage cabinets gained by surreptitious means; or
 - 6) Any condition that creates doubt about the physical integrity of the work areas or storage facilities.

D. Personnel Security. Board members involved in the source evaluation process must behave in a manner above reproach. The appearance of any real or perceived impropriety could needlessly delay and possibly jeopardize the award of any contract. Hence all board members are:

- 1. Required to comply with the following “*Financial Disclosure/Conflict of Interest Certification*” requirements:
 - a. SEB members must prepare and submit a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 450) to their cognizant Ethics Officer.
 - b. SEB members shall certify (using the memorandum shown in Attachment (1) to this enclosure) to the SEB Chairperson that their Financial Disclosure Report has been appropriately filed. This certification shall be accomplished at the SEB orientation.
 - c. SEB members shall, upon receipt of proposals, certify again (using the memorandum in Attachment (1) to this enclosure) to the SEB Chairperson that the member does not have a conflict of interest with any of the contractors, subcontractors, or teaming partners. This certification shall be retained in the contract file. **No proposal shall be released to any SEB member prior to receipt of their certification of no conflict of interest.**

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- d. If an SEB member identifies a conflict of interest with any party on the vendor list, they shall immediately inform the SEB Chairperson.
 - e. The SEB Chairperson will investigate any potential conflict of interest seeking appropriate opinions from various support staffs, including but not limited to G-LPL and G-LGL. The SEB Chairperson will also ensure that all conflicts of interest are appropriately resolved.
- 2. Prohibited from disclosing any sensitive SEB information (see paragraph B.2., above for definition) including the progress or results of any board or evaluation proceedings to any individual (government or non-government) unless authorized by the Contracting Officer or SEB Chairperson. This restriction does not apply to counsel when coordinating with other counsel or legal forums.
 - 3. To direct all attempted communications by prospective offeror's representatives or subcontractors to the Contracting Officer.
 - 4. To decline invitations from prospective offerors' personnel for any affair (social or professional) regardless of how remote it may be from the evaluation process.
 - 5. Prohibited from discussing any aspect of the evaluation with other board members outside the designated work areas.
 - 6. To report to the SEB Chairperson any known or suspected violations of items (1) through (5).
- E. **Document Security.** The safeguarding of all documentation related to the evaluation and selection process is of paramount importance. This section discusses procedures for properly receiving, securing, preparing, marking, transporting, and disposing of sensitive SEB information.
- 1. **Receipt of Proposals.** As proposals are received, the Contracting Officer shall ensure that each proposal is recorded by date and time received and all copies numbered or alphabetized. Once logged, the Contracting Officer shall safeguard the proposals until transmitted to (the PEAG Co-Chairs or the evaluation teams, as appropriate).
 - 2. **Indoctrination of Personnel.** Prior to distributing proposals, the (PEAG Co-Chairs or Contracting Officer, as appropriate) shall brief each team on the importance of security safeguards. At this time the (PEAG Co-Chairs or Contracting Officer) shall ensure that all evaluators have signed the Conflict of Interest/Nondisclosure of Information Certification. (See Attachment (1))

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24

Appendix (7)

3. **Distribution of Proposals.** The receipt of proposals by evaluation members shall be recorded on the attached sign out form (attachment (2)).

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

4. Safeguarding Materials.

- a. Evaluation Teams. Proposals shall be evaluated only in the areas designated in the evaluation plan. Evaluators shall ensure that no unauthorized individuals enter the evaluation room and must report any violations to the SEB Chairperson via the PEAG Chairperson(s). All sensitive SEB information (including evaluators' working papers) shall be stored in a locked file cabinet when not in use. Under no circumstances will sensitive SEB information be left unattended.
- b. SEB Members. All SEB members and advisors are personally responsible for securing sensitive SEB information in their possession in a locked file cabinet. If the information cannot be secured, it shall be returned to the security officer. Under no circumstances will sensitive SEB information be left unattended. Once reviewed, the information shall be returned to the security officer for disposal.

5. Accounting for Materials.

- a. The SEB Security Officer is responsible for tracking all sensitive SEB information outside of the Contracting Officer's possession. The Security Officer shall log the disposition of all sensitive SEB information (originals and copies) distributed using the attached sign out form.
- b. The Security Officer is responsible for making all copies of sensitive SEB information and ensuring that no information is left behind in the copy room when finished. Excess or unusable copies shall be placed in the security containers marked "For Destruction" (i.e., material to be shredded).

- 6. Disposing of Materials.** Board members shall place sensitive SEB information (e.g., working papers, rough drafts, computation sheets, copies, or evaluation notes or comments) to be destroyed in security containers marked "For Destruction". The Security Officer shall destroy the contents of the container(s)_____ (state how frequently materials shall be destroyed (daily, weekly, as required, etc.)). Materials to be destroyed shall be shredded.

7. Marking of Documents.

- a. Marking Information. When preparing source selection information (see subparagraph B.2.e, for a listing of this information), board members shall attach to the cover page DOT F. 4220.35 (see attachment (3)) and mark each page of the document as follows:

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE FAR 3.104

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

- b. Proprietary Data. Board members shall attach DOT F. 4220.36 (see attachment (4)) when information has been marked by offerors as proprietary information in accordance with applicable law and regulation. Proprietary information is defined as:
 - 1) Information contained in a bid or proposal or otherwise submitted to the Government by a competing contractor in response to the conduct of a particular Federal agency procurement, or in an unsolicited proposal, that has been marked by the competing contractor as proprietary information in accordance with applicable law and regulation.
 - 2) Information shall be considered proprietary information, for purposes of the Act, only when an attached transmittal document is clearly marked with a restrictive legend and the specific portions of the information whose disclosure the competing contractor desires to restrict are clearly and separately marked.
- 8. **Computer Security**. Computer generated sensitive SEB information shall be password protected and stored on an external disk. If the data generated meets the definition of “Source Selection Information” (see subparagraph B.2.e., above), it shall be marked following paragraph E.7., entitled, Marking of Documents. Diskettes shall be stored in a locked file cabinet or drawer when not in use. Under no circumstances will the electronic mail system be used to transmit Sensitive SEB Information except for the RFP where this restriction applies to only Section M.
- 9. **Facsimiles**. Unless approved by the SEB Chairperson, sensitive SEB information shall not be transmitted via FAX machines. This restriction does not apply to legal counsel communicating with parties where counsel is satisfied adequate safeguards are in place.
- 10. **Transmitting SEB Sensitive Information**.
 - a. Board Members. The board recorder shall hand deliver sensitive SEB information to board members. Prior to distributing information, the board recorder shall obtain the approval of the SEB Chairperson or Contracting Officer. If a board member is unavailable or unable to personally accept a document, the recorder shall return the document to the security officer. The security officer shall then return the information to the PEAG Chairs.
 - b. Source Selection Authority. Contracting Officers shall transmit sensitive SEB information to the SSA following the procedures at Coast Guard Acquisition Procedures Subchapter 1215.303-91.
- F. **Unauthorized Disclosure and Conflict of Interest**. Any unauthorized disclosure, release of any information, or conflicts of interest related to the evaluation shall be brought to the attention of the

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24

Appendix (7)

SEB Chairperson and a full investigation of the matter shall be conducted by appropriate security authorities designated by the SEB Chairperson.

G. Disclosures under the “Freedom of Information Act”. The SEB Chairperson has the authority to fully release requested Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) information. Authority to deny, in whole or in part, disclosure of records or requests for fee waivers in response to FOIA requests is held by the Assistant Commandant for Acquisition or “Acting” in his/her absence.

SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION – SEE 3.104



Memorandum

Subject: SOURCE SELECTION DECISION (enter the name of the
preprocurement)

Date:

4200

From: Source Selection Authority

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: Chairperson, Source Evaluation Board

Subj: CONFLICT OF INTEREST/NOT-DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION
CERTIFICATION

1. In accordance with the current laws, regulations directives and instructions pertaining to conflicts of interest, I hereby certify that:

a. Based on my current status, I have executed an OGE 450 Confidential Disclosure Report and submitted it to my Ethics Officer.

b. have or will promptly notify the SEB Chairperson of any real or apparent situation or affiliation that may constitute a conflict of interest under referenced laws, regulations, directives, and instructions.

c. Neither I nor any member of my household have any interest in or affiliation with any individual, firm or organization which may benefit from the outcome of this source selection. I understand the offerors and any primary subcontractors involved in the acquisition are:

(list offeror's and the primary subcontractors here)

2. I further certify that I understand my obligations and responsibilities under the applicable laws, regulations, directives and instructions not to discuss, divulge or otherwise disclose any information, procedure, correspondence, documentation, evaluation or other data pertaining to this acquisition, except as approved by the Contracting Officer, or as otherwise authorized by law.

Enclosure (7) to SOP 24

Appendix (7)

Attachment (1)

3. I understand that this certification will be made part of the source selection record and the official contract file and does not relieve me of the responsibility for any other disclosures or certifications requirement required by law, regulation or other directive.

Subj: CONFLICT OF INTEREST/NOT-DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CERTIFICATION

4. The use of this form has been authorized by the Source Selection Authority limited to those evaluation or selection officials who are otherwise required to file an OGE 450, Confidential Disclosure Report.

(SIGNATURE)

By direction

Note: The names and the number of offerors and subcontractors are Source Selection Sensitive Information

Attachment (2)

**SOURCE SELECTION MATERIAL
SIGN OUT FORM**

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>SOURCE SELECTION MATERIAL</u> | <u>DATE DISTRIBUTED</u> | <u>DATE RETURNED</u> | <u>INITIALS</u> |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|

Instructions:

Name: Insert the name of the individual receiving source selection materials.

Material: Identify the material provided. If a proposal, identify by company name or alpha/numeric code; proposal type; and copy number. If Government generated, identify document by title (e.g., SEB Report, TET Report, PEP, etc.) **and copy number.**

Date Dist: Enter the date board recorder distributed the material.

Date Returned: Enter the date the material was returned.

Initials: Recipients of source selection materials shall initial upon receiving such materials.

Note: Before distributing any source selection materials, the board recorder shall obtain the approval of the SEB Chairperson or contracting officer.

DEVELOPING EVALUATION STANDARDS

- A. Introduction.** Evaluation standards are developed from the evaluation factors and subfactors identified in the SP and the draft RFP. Given these factors and subfactors, the first step is for evaluation team members to describe the factor. The factor descriptions collectively serve as checks to determine that the evaluation plan is complete and that duplication does not exist between factors. The descriptions also serve as a guide to the evaluator to determine what is to be evaluated.
- B. Overview.** Having described what is to be evaluated at the factor and subfactor level, the next step is preparing the standard itself. Standards indicate the required minimum acceptable capability. Therefore, when developing standards, **the minimum requirements of a standard must not exceed the minimally acceptable capability for the solicitation and must not address requirements not included in the solicitation.** While it is preferred that quantitative standards be used because of their definitive nature, qualitative standards may also be used if more appropriate given the circumstances. The following examples of quantitative and qualitative standards are furnished for guidance:

(1) EXAMPLE OF QUANTITATIVE STANDARD:

CATEGORY: TECHNICAL

FACTOR: OPERATIONAL UTILITY

SUBFACTOR: MISSION PERFORMANCE

ELEMENT: PAYLOAD/RANGE

DESCRIPTION: This element is defined as the payload that can be carried, considering the basic design gross weight, in a given range, when operational utilization of the aircraft is considered.

STANDARD: At a weight not exceeding the basic design gross weight, the aircraft is capable of transporting a payload of:

- a. 30,000 lbs. over a 2,800 nm distance; and
- b. 48,000 lbs. over a 1,400 nm distance;

(2) EXAMPLE OF QUALITATIVE STANDARD:

AREA: TECHNICAL

FACTOR: SYSTEM INTEGRATION

SUBFACTOR: SYSTEM SAFETY

DESCRIPTION: The proposed system safety program will be evaluated for adequacy in effecting the design of changes or modifications to the baseline system to achieve special safety objectives. The evaluation will consider the specific tasks, procedures, criteria, and techniques the contractor proposes to use in the system safety program.

STANDARD: The standard is met when the proposal:

- a. Defines the scope of the system safety effort and supports the stated safety objective;
- b. Defines the qualitative analysis techniques proposed for identifying hazards to the depth required; and
- c. Describes procedures by which engineering drawings, specifications, test plans, procedures, test data, and results will be reviewed at appropriate intervals to ensure safety requirements are specified and followed.



Memorandum

Subject: SOURCE SELECTION DECISION (enter the name of the
procurement)

Date:
4200

From: Source Selection Authority

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: Chairperson, Source Evaluation Board

1. As the Source Selection Authority for this procurement, I have determined that the offer proposed by (identify vendor) provides the best overall value to satisfy the Coast Guard's requirements. This selection for (enter the supply or service the Coast Guard is procuring) is made in accordance with the criteria established in Section M of Request for Proposal (enter the solicitation number).

NAME OF SELECTING OFFICIAL

RATIONALE:

SAMPLE SOURCE SELECTION MEMORANDUM

OPENING STATEMENT FOR DEBRIEFS

Our primary objective of this debriefing is to provide you with a basis for improving future proposals by informing you of the Government's evaluation of the significant aspects of your proposal and discussing deficiencies and weaknesses which were observed. We will also provide you with the information required by law. This debriefing will be conducted following the requirements of FASA '94. This means, among other things, that we will not provide you with point by point comparisons of your offer to other offerors; nor will we reveal to you the relative merits or evaluation findings (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, and deficiencies) of competing proposals. In addition, we will not disclose the names of individuals providing reference information about your company's past performance.

(Note: Use this paragraph only when debriefing offerors within the competitive range.) I wish to emphasize that because you were not selected for award that your proposal is technically unacceptable. If that were the case, your proposal would have been judged as not being within the competitive range. That you did not receive award merely means that, after careful consideration by the evaluation teams and the Source Selection Authority, your proposal did not represent the most advantageous offer for the Government.

As I have noted, we cannot disclose the relative merits of competitors; however, we can and will provide you with the following information:

Our evaluation of the significant weak or deficient factors in your offer. We also will provide you with the technical merits of your proposal (The second statement is optional);

The overall evaluated cost and technical rating of the successful offeror and the overall evaluated cost and technical rating of your offer;

A summary of the rationale for the award;

(As applicable) The make and model of the end item to be delivered under contract as offered by the successful offeror; and

Responses to relevant questions posed by you as to whether source selection procedures set forth in the solicitation, applicable regulations and other applicable authorities were followed by us.

I can assure you that the evaluation criteria set forth in the solicitation were meticulously followed and that no additional criteria were used. Furthermore, all source selection procedures as required by the FAR, TAR, and our agency procedures were strictly followed.

APPENDIX A
LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AP | Acquisition Plan |
| CAMP | Competitive Acquisition Management Panel |
| CBD | Commerce Business Daily |
| CGAP | Coast Guard Acquisition Procedure |
| COMDTINST | Commandant Instruction |
| C/PET | Cost or Price Evaluation Team |
| FAR | Federal Acquisition Regulation |
| FPR | Final Proposal Revision |
| HCA | Head of the Contracting Activity |
| KO | Contracting Officer |
| KS | Contract Specialist |
| MAPP | Major Acquisition Policies and Procedures |
| MAR | Mission Analysis Requirement |
| MNS | Mission Need Statement |
| OF | Optional Form |
| OGE | Office of Government Ethics |
| ORD | Operational Requirements Document |
| P1P | Phase One Proposal |
| PEAG | Proposal Evaluation & Analysis Group |
| PEP | Proposal Evaluation Procedures |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PORD | Preliminary Operational Requirements Document |
| PR | Purchase Request |
| RFI | Request For Information |
| RFP | Request for Proposal |
| SB | Small Business |
| SCET | Software Capability Evaluation Team |
| SDB | Small Disadvantaged Business |
| SEB | Source Evaluation Board |
| SF | Standard Form |
| SP | Selection Plan |
| SSA | Source Selection Authority |
| TAG | Technical Advisory Group |
| TAM | Transportation Acquisition Manual |
| TAR | Transportation Acquisition Regulation |
| TET | Technical Evaluation Team |